

**A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICAL RESOURCE
FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING:
Developing a Methodology for Aiding the Dialogue Between
Pastoral Counseling and Theological Faith Traditions**

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**by
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This dissertation, written by

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Abstract

A Practical Theological Hermeneutic Resource

For Pastoral Counseling:

Developing a Methodology for Aiding the Dialogue Between Pastoral Counseling and Theological Faith Traditions

Dennis Garland Smith

As the specialized ministry of pastoral counseling has grown and has increasingly borrowed insights from the contemporary psychotherapeutic disciplines, pastoral counselors have often struggled with making effective connections between their pastoral counseling activities and the theological foundations of their traditional faith resources. The thesis of this dissertation is that the growing field of practical theology can offer pastoral counselors with productive methodological resources for guiding this counseling/theology dialogue.

The design of the study first explores the significant developments in contemporary practical theology, in which it is shown that these developments provide effective tools for studying human activity and creating significant dialogue between this human activity and Christian theology. Next, a review is given of twentieth-century American attempts to speak theologically about pastoral care and counseling.

In the project, a practical theological methodology, called the Modified Hermeneutic Circle, is created and applied to the pastoral counseling issue of human wellness. Following the steps of the Modified Hermeneutic Circle, a review of cultural, biblical, and theological models of human well-being is made, and a new Christian model of human well-being, called the Contextual Model of Human Well-Being is developed. This new theological model is then returned into the counseling situation where it is used to guide and evaluate therapy. Four case summaries are given.

This study demonstrates that since both practical theology and pastoral counseling are grounded in the praxis of human experience, these two fields combine extremely well. The developing methodologies of practical theology can be very useful to the field of pastoral counseling, especially as pastoral counselors attempt to better understand the relationship between their work and their theology.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In 1964, in St. Louis, a new health organization was formed. It was the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. At its initial conception, there were 21 members. By 1970, there were 1,000 members across the nation, and by 1985, that number had increased to 3,000 members. The growth of this association in itself indicates the rapid and successful growth of the specialized ministry known as pastoral counseling. In April 1989, the many members of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors again gathered in St. Louis in order to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization.

As this specialized ministry has grown over the past several decades, so has the interest in better understanding its identity, purpose, and uniqueness as both a ministry and a mental health resource. One way in which this interest has been expressed has been for pastoral counselors to seek connections between their counseling activities and their historical religious healing traditions. The motivation for making such connections have been two-fold. One reason has been the critique that many pastoral counselors, in seeking increased therapeutic skills, have become overly identified with contemporary secular psychotherapies; and thus, have lost any sense of uniqueness. The other reason has been, that while promoting the important

value of learning from the current psychotherapies, there is also a strong appreciation that one's own religious heritage provides some rich, unique resources that can greatly aid pastoral counselors in their work.

One aspect of continually exploring and defining the uniqueness of pastoral counseling in relationship to traditional faith resources has been to create dialogues between the disciplines of pastoral counseling and Christian theology. The classical expression of this has been for pastoral counselors to ask the question as to how they can understand their counseling ministry in theological terms.

Purpose and Scope of Study

The purpose of this study is to propose and examine one possible methodology for creating effective dialogue between pastoral counseling and Christian theology. This methodology comes from the field of contemporary practical theology. It is my contention that there is a natural bond between practical theology and pastoral counseling in that they both begin and are founded in praxis, rather than in normative theory. They both start in a ministry of doing, and then move to reflective analysis of this action. Because of this common emphasis upon praxis, the methodological approaches being explored by practical theologians seem to me to be well suited for the practical ministry of pastoral counseling.

This dissertational study has been a ten-year process. The first five years were spent in an academic setting, learning my

craft, asking the questions that gave rise to this interest in the relationship between pastoral counseling and practical theology, and exploring a methodological approach for creating an effective dialogue between these two disciplines. The second five years have been spent in a clinical setting, applying my craft, relating this methodological approach to my pastoral counseling, and developing some meaningful answers to my academic questions.

Likewise, the scope of this dissertation follows a process of thought. This process moves through the stages of (1) raising the issue of the uniqueness of pastoral counseling, (2) exploring the discipline of practical theology and the richness of its perspective for pastoral counseling, (3) using the methodological approaches of practical theology to focus upon significant practical theological questions about pastoral counseling, (4) concentrating on one of these questions and exploring traditional Christian answers and perspectives to this question, (5) applying these perspectives to my therapeutic work as a pastoral counselor, and (6) evaluating this methodology as a useful tool for pastoral counselors.

Basic Definitions

As this dissertational study is an attempt to formulate a relationship between pastoral counseling and practical theology, a beginning definition is needed for each of these two disciplines. Also defined is my present understanding of the key concepts of praxis and traditional faith resources.

Pastoral Counseling

In 1966, Howard Clinebell, in his book Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, which is often used as a standard seminary text, defined pastoral counseling as

the utilization, by a minister, of a one-to-one or small group relationship to help people handle their problems of living more adequately and grow towards fulfilling their potentialities.¹

Twenty years later, the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, which is the national professional organization of pastoral counseling specialists, emphasized the relationship between theology and contemporary psychology in their definition of the pastoral counseling task, which is

a process in which a pastoral counselor utilizes insights and principles derived from the disciplines of theology and the behavioral sciences in working with individuals, couples, families, groups and social systems towards the achievement of wholeness and health.²

As the Association has attempted to guide this pastoral counseling activity, it has had to struggle with every aspect of the above definition, asking such questions as: Who are pastoral counselors -- any clergy person who does some counseling or only those clergy who have had specialized training and credentials in psychotherapeutic disciplines, and what about trained lay persons who consider their counseling work as pastoral? What is the

¹Howard J. Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 20. This quote is from the original edition. All subsequent references to this work are from the revised edition.

²American Association of Pastoral Counselors, The Pastoral Counseling Specialist (Fairfax, Va.: AAPC, 1989).

relationship between theology and the behavioral sciences, how do their various principles inform and influence the other, what is the relationship between the professional pastoral counseling and the Church community, and how is what pastoral counselors do unique from marriage and family therapists, or psychologists? What is the focus of which pastoral counseling; is it only with psychological concerns of individuals and groups in a counseling situation, or are wider social issues (justice, environment, nuclear issues) appropriate concerns for the pastoral counselor? And finally, what is an appropriate pastoral counseling concept of wholeness and health; and what model, philosophy, or faith belief about human life shapes this concept?

Thus, any attempt at defining pastoral counseling raises as many questions as it resolves. In a very basic sense, this dissertational study in its entirety is my definitional understanding of pastoral counseling. With that in mind, the working definition of pastoral counseling used in this study is as follows: Pastoral counseling is the activity in which persons steeped in theological traditions and the learnings of the behavioral sciences attempt to dialogue, combine, and use these insights to provide a pastoral response to persons, groups, and situations with the purpose of increasing human health, existential and corporate wholeness, and universal well-being.

Practical Theology

While there are also different individual interpretational emphases given to definitions of practical theology, the common

foundation is the belief that in practical theology the starting point for developing a theological process is in praxis. Renewed interest in such a theological process has increased in the past ten to fifteen years, as seen in such books as Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World, Don S. Browning, editor³ and Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology, Lewis S. Mudge & James N. Poling, editors.⁴ The definitional understanding of practical theology which is used in this disserational study, and those persons who have informed it, are clarified within the study itself, especially in Chapter 2. An introductory definition is that practical theology consists of those efforts which attempt to both faithfully and effectively understand and communicate the good news of God's salvific acts to contemporary humanity through the reflective study of and active response to human actions, both individual and corporate.

Within the Christian faith, practical theology is part of the inclusive and basic theological task of interpretation -- a task which attempts to faithfully understand the Christian Gospel, and effectively communicate its message to contemporary society. Towards fulfilling this interpretive task, practical theology works together with the other traditional branches of

³Don S. Browning, ed., Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983).

⁴Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling, eds., Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

theology; systematic theology with its emphasis upon norms and doctrines, and historical/biblical theology with its emphasis on history, church traditions, and scripture. As stated, these definitional and relational concerns will be explored more fully in Chapter 2.

Praxis

Central to the process of practical theology is the concept of praxis. Praxis is most simply defined as the reflected study of human action, which is what practical theologians attempt to do from a theological point of view. The activity of praxis is to observe human action and then, through critical evaluation, to attempt to push behind the action in order to critically reflect upon the motivations, systematic context, and results of that action. Thus, one of Juan Segundo's books, which attempted to evaluate ministry in Latin America from a practical theological perspective, is entitled The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action. The terms hidden, motives, and action in this title all point to the process of praxis as an attempt to understand the underlying causes, contexts, and results of human action. In Praxis and Action, Richard Bernstein made this same point while defining Karl Marx's use of praxis:

Just as Marx sought to demystify Hegel's Philosophy of Right, he now seeks to demystify political economy; to reveal to us what is really going on underlying the elaborate forms of reification of the world of economic "things" within which we operate.⁵

⁵Richard J. Bernstein, Praxis and Action (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 61. Emphasis added.

Praxis, then, is the critical reflection upon human action in the hope of better understanding "what is really going on" underneath that action.

Traditional Faith Resources

When referring to the resources which exist within one's religious heritage, these resources are often referred to as traditional faith resources. When identifying these traditional resources within the Christian faith, many point to biblical interpretations and theological formulations. Others tend to emphasize ritualistic resources, such as prayer, meditation, and healing rites. Thomas Oden, in the article "Recovering Lost Identity," focused upon what he called the "classical models of Christian pastoral care," which he found to have their classical forms in the writings of such historical church leaders as Augustine, Calvin, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Gregory the Great, Luther, Jeremy Taylor, and Tertullian.⁴

When I use the term traditional faith resources, and apply it to my own Christian heritage, I am referring to all of these various traditions and resources; scripture, historical writings, ritualistic resources, and systematical theological attempts to speak about this heritage. As Christians, we have over two thousand years of rich resources, resources which can guide and instruct the work of contemporary pastoral counselors. In this dissertational study, the traditional faith resources

⁴Thomas C. Oden, "Recovering Lost Identity," Journal of Pastoral Care 34, no. 1 (March 1980): 8.

which I am focusing upon are the theological resources. For this reason, the title of the study refers to developing a methodology for aiding the dialogue between pastoral counseling and theological faith traditions.

The Need to Theologize Pastoral Counseling

As pastoral counseling has grown over the past several decades as a distinctive ministry, there has been increased emphasis upon the need for trained professional counseling skills on the part of the pastoral counselor. Because of this need, there has also been a natural, and very beneficial, tendency for pastoral counselors to learn from the important insights and skill developments of the various fields of contemporary secular psychotherapy. By contemporary secular psychotherapies, I am referring to those approaches to counseling and human care which have been developed over the past several decades in the scientific discipline of psychology. Included in these psychotherapies are such diverse therapies as the psychoanalytic stream begun by Freud; the human potential therapies growing out of Maslowian psychology; the behavioralist psychotherapies; systems and family therapy. These and other therapies have given the pastoral counselor an almost endless source of rich resources from which to learn and benefit.

At the same time, however, observers from both beyond and within the field of pastoral counseling have begun to warn about the dangers of over reliance on these therapies. The warning is that such over reliance on the secular psychotherapies could

cause pastoral counselors to lose any ministerial uniqueness as a counseling form. One danger of relying too fully upon secular psychotherapeutic insights is that the practice of pastoral counseling will begin to look identical to the counseling activity of other mental health workers, and display no unique perspective or wisdom.

A second danger is that underneath any developed piece of information or theory about human nature, there exist basic assumptions about the nature and purpose of human life. If pastoral counselors are claiming to work out of Christian assumptions and belief statements about the ultimate nature and purpose of human existence, then there needs to be a careful investigation of the underlying philosophical assertions beneath any proposed secular psychological strategy. As an example, an uncritical use of many contemporary psychotherapeutic strategies could lead a pastoral counselor to promoting an understanding of human nature which is more hedonistic in character than Christian.

Indeed, some critics state that this loss of unique identity has already occurred. Don Browning, professor of religion and psychological studies at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, made this observation:

Sometimes the relation to the social sciences is so prominent in a particular region of practical theology that the region comes close to being identified with that science, such as has been the case in pastoral care's identification with psychotherapy.⁷

⁷Browning, ed., Practical Theology, 14.

William Hulme, professor of pastoral care at Luther-Northwestern Seminaries, in his book Pastoral Care and Counseling, argued that while pastoral counseling has not completely lost its soul to secular psychotherapies, he was also convinced that there is some truth to the critics's claims on this point.

Now that pastoral counseling has "come of age," however, some have accused it of departing from its ministerial roots. Not only has pastoral counseling incorporated much from the psychological disciplines, it has according to this criticism, become a psychological discipline. The theology that may be obvious in worship seems absent in pastoral counseling. Rather than integrating psychological insights into the ministry of counseling, say these critics, pastoral counseling has divorced itself from its traditional religious base. If pastoral counselors have become more psychologists or psychotherapists than pastors, then pastoral counseling has lost its uniqueness or even distinctiveness.⁸

In 1980, Thomas Oden, chairman of the Ph.D. program in psychology and religion at Drew Theological Seminary, wrote an often quoted article on this danger, entitled Recovering Lost Identity. In this article, Oden analyzed historical and current pastoral care writings in order to demonstrate that the classical pastoral tradition had been quickly and abruptly forgotten in twentieth-century pastoral counseling, and he concluded that:

A major effort is needed today to rediscover and remine the classical models of Christian pastoral care, and to bring back into availability the key texts of that classical tradition following about fifty years of neglect, a neglect the depths of which are arguably unprecedented in any previous Christian century.⁹

⁸William E. Hulme, Pastoral Care and Counseling (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981), 8.

⁹Oden, 8.

The emphasizing of this danger is not meant to imply that pastoral counselors should not learn from the insights and skills of secular psychotherapies. There is a rich wealth of helpful and healing resources available pastoral counselors from these various therapies. Indeed, religious healers of every century have used the insights and learnings of their day to aid their attempts at bringing care and comfort to others. In their landmark book Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, church historian William A. Clebsch and pastoral care specialist Charles R. Jaekle made this observation about the issue of learning from current secular insights:

The lesson to be learned in this connection from the history of pastoral care is simply that openness to new psychological theories and notions in fact represents and continues a powerful trend found in every epoch of pastoring. The great tradition of pastoral care stands constantly ready to receive its ideas and its vocabulary both from psychological theoreticians and from popular language about the soul. The normative feature of pastoral care in historical perspective is neither a uniquely Christian psychology nor a particular language in which human trouble must be described, but it is the constancy of the pastoral posture and of the four pastoral functions of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling.¹⁰

In referring to this quote from Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, Howard Clinebell made the following affirmation:

In light of the pastoral care heritage, the authors [Clebsch & Jaekle] recommend that in the present period of transition we remain open to the insights of various and even conflicting psychological theories. This is essential because the human capacity for trouble is intricate, complex, and inventive. This

¹⁰William R. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 79. Emphasis added.

heritage-informed guidance is sound. Alert openness to new understandings of personality and therapy on the part of contemporary pastoral counselors will facilitate the creative breakthroughs needed to release the potentialities of counseling as a pastoral art. Time undoubtedly will prove that some of the new methods are of limited usefulness for pastors. The road to better pastoral skill may have dead ends and detours, but the only alternative is not to travel at all! Direct encounter with the ferment of new developments in current psychotherapies can broaden the counseling horizons of ministers, deepen their general approach to pastoral care, and stimulate their interest in further reading, study, and training.¹¹

Thus, the pastoral counselors of today are not behaving any differently than pastoral care givers of past generations, given that they have all developed specific activities of care which relied upon the best wisdom and insights of the day. If there is any uniqueness with the contemporary circumstances, that uniqueness is based upon the current explosion of knowledge and our increased abilities in the area of communication and information sharing.

Given this, the danger is not so much in learning from the expanding world of today; but more that in attempting to keep current with this expanding world of information, pastoral counselors might fail to stay tied to the rich resources and unique views about human nature developed over centuries of Christian traditions. If this were to happen, pastoral counseling would lose its unique gift and power, and would deprive both the pastoral counselor and the client the benefit of

¹¹Howard Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling Rev. Ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 20.

the great wisdom and perspectives which exist within the teachings of the faith.

For this reason, there is the continual need to reclaim and reaffirm this essential contextual relationship between the art of pastoral counseling and the theological perspectives and insights of the Christian faith. The theologian in every pastoral counselor needs to continually remind the clinician to keep the dialogue between one's counseling activity and one's theological explorations alive and active. This dissertational study is one more attempt to aid that dialogue.

It needs to be noted that this dialogue is presently alive and very active. While the above critiques which point to the current tendency of becoming overly focused upon learning from contemporary psychotherapies, there have also been some important, and on-going, attempts to relate traditional Christian faith resources to this growing field of pastoral counseling, and to give concrete expression to the uniqueness of pastoral counseling as a ministry. Examples of such attempts are Clebsch and Jaekle's Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, Seward Hiltner's classic Preface to Pastoral Theology (1958) Thomas Oden's Agenda for Theology (1979), William Oglesby's Biblical Themes for Pastoral Care (1980), Donald Capps' Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counseling (1981), and William Hulme's Pastoral Care and Counseling : Using the Unique Resources of the Christian Tradition (1981).

The two central concerns of these efforts have been on

providing specific religious interpretations of the pastoral counselor's activity (such as Hiltner's use of the concept of shepherding), and on giving specific suggestions for using religious resources in the counseling setting (such as the use of scripture and prayer). As such, they provide the pastoral counselor with important and helpful suggestions about the unique characteristics of pastoral counseling.

In reviewing these classical writings in the area of pastoral care and counseling, it is readily apparent that these writers have spent some time and energy in developing creative interactions between their psychological knowledge, their theological knowledge, and their experiences in doing pastoral counseling. Out of the ferment of this creative psychological-theological-counseling interaction, new insights have emerged. Those of this present generation who attempt to provide a ministry of pastoral counseling have been greatly enriched by the sharing of these insights and results coming out of these creative processes.

However, the emphasis in these writings has been on the results, the products, of these persons' efforts, with less information given about the creative interactive process itself. Herbert Anderson made this point when reviewing Hulme's Pastoral Care and Counseling.

However, this book does not further the development of a methodology by which the unique resources of the faith inform and are in turn informed by pastoral action in which care is the focus. Hulme has therefore written another book on applied theology - a book in which the application of Christian teaching to the

practice of the Christian life, rather than their mutual dialogue, is central.¹²

From this perspective, then, one of the crucial needs in the current state of pastoral counseling is the need to further explore and evaluate various methodologies which provide specific processes for creating an effective interchange of insights among the activities of pastoral counseling, current psychotherapeutic techniques, and the traditional resources and theological understandings of the faith community. The purpose of this dissertational study is to respond to this need by presenting and examining one such methodological approach to creating an effective dialogue between contemporary pastoral counseling and traditional Christian theological resources -- and that method coming from the field of practical theology.

Outline of Study

This dissertational study follows a four part outline, represented by the remaining four chapters. In Chapter 2, entitled "In Search of a Method: An Exploration of Practical Theology," a review is made of the recent developments in the field of practical theology, and an analysis of the central contemporary themes and issues in this field. Chapter 3, "Pastoral Counseling and Christian Theology: A Historical Statement" summarizes the attempts over the past several decades to understand pastoral counseling activity from a theological

¹²Herbert Anderson, "Review of William E. Hulme's Pastoral Care and Counseling: Using the Unique Resources of the Christian Tradition," Pastoral Psychology 30, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 201.

perspective, and conclude with a presentation on how the field of practical theology can make significant contributions to these theologizing attempts. In Chapter 4, "Christian Well-Being: Applying A Practical Theological Methodology to Pastoral Counseling," the main thesis of the dissertational study is explored by developing and applying one practical theological methodology to a specific pastoral counseling issue. The goal of this chapter is twofold: first to illustrate the use of the practical theological methodology as an aid to the field of pastoral counseling; and second, to evaluate the methodological implications of this interfacing of the disciplines of practical theology and pastoral counseling. Chapter 5, "Summary and Conclusions," presents and critiques the results and contributions of this study. It is my hope that through this dissertational work that (1) a positive partnership between pastoral counseling and practical theology will be demonstrated, (2) some helpful theological information for pastoral counselors will be generated, and (3) practical theology will be valued as useful in keeping modern pastoral counseling from losing its unique identity and heritage within the rapidly expanding world of psychological knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

In Search of a Method:

An Exploration of Practical Theology

It was a Sunday morning in the Fall of 1973. I was the newly hired seminarian assistant of a suburban United Methodist Church, and my function this morning was to lead a recently formed Sunday School class consisting of young married couples. The senior pastor had asked me to begin this class because the members of this age group had expressed their frustration and anger over feeling ignored by the rest of the church community.

After several weeks of sharing their anger over the nature and practice of this particular church, one of the members of the group changed the flow of the conversation on this Sunday morning by stating that her feelings of being ignored came not just from the other church members, but also from another, higher source. "God is not real to me and has no affect upon my life. I have found that no matter how much I pray, I just do not experience God as a reality in my everyday living. I wish that I could believe in a God, but given my experience, or rather, my lack of any experience of God, I can't."

The ensuing discussion showed that most of the other class members shared similar sentiments. Though active church members throughout their lives, God was very much a stranger to them. Their daily lives were spent mainly within a secular framework,

without any transcendent element to which they related. A God was not present with them.

I share this story at the beginning of this chapter on an exploration of practical theology because this event prompted a series of actions on my part which constituted one of my most concerted and formal attempts to do practical theology. Having defined practical theology in the previous chapter as the reflective study and active response to human actions, it seems to be appropriate to begin a study on practical theological methodology by examining a series of concrete activities about which I have attempted to study reflectively and to respond theologically.

My actions in response to the above event were:

1. To gather and study more empirical data -- I spent the rest of that year in relationship with the members of that Sunday school class gaining a clearer understanding of their faith experiences. My observations led me to become interested in two aspects of their experience; their existential experience of the hiddenness of God, and the pervasive influence of the secular orientation and perspective of the surrounding society. I then took advantage of an opportunity to use the structure of a Doctor of Ministry program to focus upon the problem of how one can attempt to make more meaningful the experience of God in a highly secular society. I began this part of my inquiry by trying to understand more fully the dynamics of modern secularism, including studying the insights gained through sociological

analysis of secularism as a social phenomenon, and the contributions of linguistic analysis in clarifying the relationship between experience and our attempts to use language to communicate and share those experiences.

2. To reflect upon the data theologically -- After I felt that I had a fairly clear understanding of the dynamics involved in the modern secular experience of the hiddenness of God, I then explored the theological ramifications and responses to this experience. I studied the ways that the faith community has attempted to speak to the problem of the hiddenness of God throughout its historical existence, from the Israelites' attempts to respond to the question "Where is your God?" (Ps. 115:2), to Thomas Aquinas's attempts to use philosophical logic to prove God's existence, to the modern death of God controversy. I studied other contemporary endeavors to reformulate our theological statements in light of the challenge and critique of secularism. I made decisions about the relationship between experience, scriptural interpretation and authority, and changing church traditions. Finally, I reformulated my own theological concepts and statements in response to the contemporary issue of the hiddenness of God.

3. To apply the results of the theological reflection back into the empirical situation -- I next formed a project in which I developed a sermon series through which I attempted to proclaim the possibility of experiencing the reality of God within a secular society, especially speaking to the places within the

secular view of reality that there exists avenues to the experience of the transcendent.

4. To evaluate the effect of one's efforts to move from the theological reflection back into empirical action, through feedback and empirical study -- Through the use of questionnaires and a study group, I attempted to evaluate my efforts at proclaiming the Christian witness of God's existence to an audience oriented to modern secularism. Such feedback and evaluation moves one back to the activity involved in step #1, and begins the process again of experience moving to reflection and reformulation moving back into experience.

This, then, is a thumbnail sketch of a three year endeavor on my part to do practical theology. Out of this experience I have continued to view practical theology, with its focus upon human action, as a very helpful approach to doing Christian theology. As a pastoral counselor, whose ministry is directly focused upon understanding and influencing human behavior, the practical theological approach seems especially appropriate.

This chapter summarizes current developments in the discipline of practical theology as a prelude to exploring a possible beneficial relationship between pastoral counseling and practical theology. This is done within the framework of my own faith background, the Christian faith; and within the cultural framework that has had the major influence on the thought and resources of the western Christian Church, and within which both I and most of the people to whom I minister

exists, that being the Western European/North American culture. In doing so, I will first provide a further personal statement about my own introduction to the discipline of practical theology and its relationship to the total theological task.

Practical Theology and the Theological Task:
A Personal Statement

As I was growing up, I understood the meaning of theo -
logy as "the study of God." However, as I entered into my formal theological studies, it became clear that God was not scientifically available for study. Thus, it has often been argued that theology is the study of, not of God, but of the human faith response to God. Many theologians have therefore defined theology as the study of the responses of the community of faith. In this way, Pannenberg wrote, "Theology is the science of God, but a science which can approach its subject matter only indirectly, through the study of religions."¹ Likewise, Schubert Ogden defined theology as "the fully reflective understanding of the Christian witness of faith as decisive for human existence."²

The implicit danger of this approach to theology is that such a theological endeavor can become reduced to being just another secular scientific study of human behavior. In this case the human behavior being studied is that of religious activity.

¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 347.

²Schubert M. Ogden, "What is Theology," Journal of Religion 52 (Jan. 1972): 22-40. Emphasis added.

I am attracted to Schleiermacher's solution to this problem in which he saw theology not as the study of God (normative theology), nor as the study of human experience and behavior (empirical theology). Instead, Schleiermacher understood theology as the human experience of God, with the starting place being those points where a relationship between God and humanity have been experienced.³ In this way, theology is the reflective study of the acts of God as experienced by humanity, and witnessed to by the community of faith.

The phrase "witnessed to" in the above definition points to my understanding of the central theological task that confronts the Christian community and informs its every effort. It is reported in Matt. 28:19-20, that Jesus gave the following directive to the disciples: "Go, then, to all persons everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." (All biblical references cited by the author are from the RSV).

This goal has become the critical task of the Christian community, to proclaim the good news of God's salvific activity to the current society, for the purpose of conversion and edification. The task of Christian theology is to make use of its reflective study in order to instruct the faith community on how to most faithfully and effectively communicate its good news.

³Friedrich Schleiermacher, trans., Brief Outline of the Study of Theology, by Terrence N. Tice (Richmond, Va: John Knox, 1966.

Basic to this task is what I call the traditionary process. There are three main parts to this process; the Tradition (with a capital T), tradition (with a small t), and traditions (in the plural). As originally defined by the Fourth World Conference of Faith and Order, held by the World Council of Churches,⁴ the Tradition is the Gospel itself, transmitted from generation to generation in and by the faith community. It is the good news about what God has done and is doing as our Creator, our Savior, and our Sustainer -- God's actions as experienced by humanity.

In contrast to this Tradition, the tradition does not refer to the story that is being transmitted, but rather to the process of transmission itself. It is the act, and dynamic process, of handing over the gospel witness to another -- the task of taking the Tradition and interpreting it into the context of the society being addressed. In this way, tradition and traditionary process are identical and interchangeable terms, and are also identical to what I have defined as the critical task of theology.

Finally, the traditions are the concrete, historical, and temporary forms of expression used by the faithful to transmit the Tradition. These traditions refer to a specific form of expression, such as Mass in the Roman Catholic Church, or a doctrinal formulation. These traditions, hopefully, are always changing and being reinterpreted, through the traditionary process, in order to keep alive the changeless Tradition.

⁴P.C. Rodger and L. Vischer, eds., The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order (Montreal: World Council of Churches, 1963), 50.

Understood in this way, the traditionary process is one of constant interpretation, in which the history of this process, and of the theology that serves it, has been a history of a continual interpretation of the Gospel into contemporary and understandable terms. Essential to this interpretive task are two important functions. The first is to gain a clear and faithful understanding of the message of the Christian Gospel (the Tradition). The second is to proclaim and interpret this message into those forms (traditions) which will most clearly and effectively communicate its meaning.

These also point to the two dangers that exist within this task. One is that particular traditions can become confused with the Tradition. When this happens, there are usually attempts to keep these traditions rigid and changeless. With the passage of time, they become inflexible to the changes in society; and as a result, lose their ability to effectively communicate. This is the extreme of dogmatic absolutism.

The other danger is to so accommodate the forms of communication (the traditions) to contemporary thought-concepts that the authentic message of the Gospel (the Tradition) is lost. This is the extreme of cultural relativism.

Thus, this interpretive task that is central to the traditionary process and basic to all theological enterprises, calls for efforts which strive to be both faithful to the Gospel and effective in its ability to communicate to contemporary society. Key to such efforts are the particular traditions that

are constantly created and recreated. As new traditions are created, or old traditions reinterpreted, the Church must continually ask, "Is this new tradition faithful to the changeless Gospel?" and "Is it effectively communicating this Gospel message to its hearers?" These two questions, then, are the core of the theological task.

With this definition of theology, I am stressing the contention that there is one theology, and one theological enterprise. However, the materials and methods used in attempting to accomplish the task of theology vary, and it is on this level that different types or branches of theology exist. Historically, there have usually been three branches of theology given: systematic theology, historical theology (with biblical theology being a specialized offshoot), and practical theology. The chart below shows how I understand these types of theology to have their difference in material and methods used, yet all serving the one theology and its definitive task of interpreting of the Tradition into contemporary life.

<u>Theological Type</u>	<u>Working Material & Starting Point</u>	<u>Using the Tools of:</u>
Systematic Theology	Norms, Doctrines	Philosophy, Logic Apologetics, Polemics
Historical Theology	Church Traditions History	Historical Method and Analysis
Biblical Theology	Biblical Material	Exegesis, Hermeneutics
Practical Theology	Human Actions	Descriptive Analysis, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology

Given this understanding of Christian theology, its central task, and the relationship among its various branches, practical theology consists of those efforts by which one attempts to both faithfully and effectively understand and communicate the good news of God's salvific acts to contemporary humanity through the reflective study of and active response to human actions.

This understanding is further clarified by taking the two action phrases from the above description of practical theology (faithfully and effectively understand and communicate...through the reflective study of and active response to), and expanding them into the following five step framework of providing a beginning method for doing practical theology:

- Step # 1: Become aware of an active issue in the current theological communication of the Gospel.
- Step # 2: Gather and study empirical data and analyses of relevant praxis in an attempt to understand the significant factors that current human actions bring to the issue.
- Step # 3: Reflect upon the data and analyses theologically, including the reflection upon and reforming of one's own theological communications in light of the study of praxis.
- Step # 4: Apply the results of this theological reflection back into the empirical arena.
- Step # 5: Experience and evaluate the effect of one's new theological input upon praxis, thus beginning the process over again.

As seen in these five steps, this method of doing practical theology tends to follow a circular pattern, in which the actions that constitute the praxis of the Christian faith informs and reforms our theological thought processes, and our theological

reflections in turn informs and reforms our praxis, with the process continuing over and over. Thus, the activity of practical theology creates a continual dialogue between the social arena of actions (or in the terminology used earlier, the social arena of traditions), and the reflective arena of understanding and communicating the essential messages of the Gospel (or the Tradition). In this way, practical theology attempts to carry out the dual functions of the traditionary process, remaining faithful to the authentic story of God's activity, and at the same time tell, and act out, this story in meaningful terms for the current society. For this reason, I am convinced that practical theology provides a very valuable tool for the community of faith, as a method of constantly evaluating, critiquing, and changing contemporary faith traditions.

When defining practical theology, the question is often asked concerning the proper starting point. Does practical theology begin in the university, with formal reflective thinking upon theological issues? Or does it begin in the streets, with relevant issues arising out of experience and activity? I believe that it can start at either place. Reflective thinking can raise issues that move one into experiencing and evaluating current traditions in light of these theological issues. Or issues can arise out of the praxis of current social traditions that moves one into reflective theological thinking. That is why I purposely used the phrase "Becoming aware of an active issue"

in step #1. This awareness could arise out of reflective thinking or experienced action. The important concern is that the dialogue between reflection and action is carried out in its circular pattern. In fact, I would argue that this circular activity starts for each of us at a very early age. Children often engage in very elementary and informal types of practical theology at a young age, asking such questions as "Dad, Rev. Jones said in church today that God answers prayers. I have been praying for God to give me a pony, and I haven't gotten one. How come?". Thus, we are already moving along this circular dialogue in such a way that the crucial question is not deciding our starting place, but rather, with becoming more conscious and skilled at what we have already been doing.

Much of my thought in constructing this initial statement on practical theology was originally influenced by the work of Juan Luis Segundo, one of South America's leading liberation theologians. In 1983, while studying at the School of Theology at Claremont, California, I took a course in practical theology. During this course I encountered the work of Segundo, and was impressed with his detailed methodological statement given in the opening chapter of The Liberation of Theology.⁵ Segundo, too, saw a circular pattern in his attempts at taking a practical theological approach to the social experience of oppression, and dialoguing this with his understanding of the Gospel's call for

⁵Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, trans. John Drury (New York: Orbis, 1976) 7-38.

the liberation and uplifting of all human life. He has called this continuing process of dialogue between action and reflection the "hermeneutic circle," which he defined as

the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal. "Hermeneutic" means "having to do with interpretation." And the circular nature of this interpretation stems from the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret the word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then to go back and reinterpret the word of God again, and so on.⁶

The following represents my own attempts to outline and illustrate Segundo's hermeneutic circle, based upon Segundo's methodological explanations.⁷

Steps in the Hermeneutic Circle

- Step # 1: A critical experiencing and evaluating of reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion.

- Step # 2: Applying our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general, and to theology in particular.

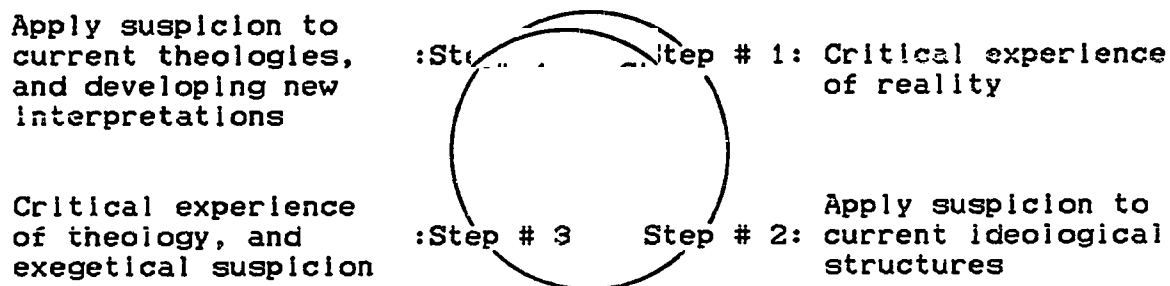
- Step # 3: A critical and new experiencing and evaluating theological reality, which leads us to exegetical suspicion (the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account).

- Step # 4: Developing our new hermeneutic, our new way of interpreting the fountainhead of our faith with the new elements at our disposal. This new way of interpreting causes us to change and experience reality accordingly, which returns us to Step # 1.

⁶Ibid, 8.

⁷Ibid, 9-18.

THE HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE



An aspect of this hermeneutic circle which for me was a unique contribution by Segundo was his concept of suspicion. Segundo has called for the practical theologian to be suspicious of all prevailing concepts and practices; both on an ideological level in analyzing contemporary social structures and practices, and on a theological level in analyzing prevailing theological interpretations and faith communications. It is in the openness to being intellectually suspicious on both of these levels that the practical theologian can bring fresh and creative insights to the general theological task. Accepted social customs can be fully examined in order to discover their various theological meanings. And age-old church traditions and theological statements can be openly tested as to the authenticity of their witness to the Gospel.

This call to be ideologically and exegetically (or theologically) suspicious fits well with my understanding of the importance of continually evaluating, critiquing, and changing concrete traditions, so that our theological statements and faith activities remain both faithful to the Gospel and effective in

communicating to one's contemporary society. Thus, my study of practical theology had given me further clarifications and clearer procedures for carrying out the theological task of faithfully and effectively communicating the Christian Gospel.

Having given this personal statement concerning my own growing interest in practical theology, and understandings about its function and place in the overall theological task, I will now turn to the history of practical theology as a discipline, and to the current academic discussions about the nature and use of practical theology.

History of Practical Theology

There are a variety of good summaries of the history of practical theology. In Practical Theology, the Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World, Edward Farley and John E. Burkhart provide historical perspectives upon current practical theology with their articles, "Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm," and "Schleiermacher's Vision for Theology."^a In Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology, Edward Farley again focuses upon the historical perspectives in his article, "Interpreting Situations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Practical Theology;" especially under the sections, "The Nineteenth-Century Consensus: The Clericalization of Practical Theology," and "The Contemporary Challenge to the

^aBrowning, ed., 21-60.

Nineteenth-Century Consensus."⁹ It is not my attempt to recreate this documented history here, rather only to summarize it in order to put the work of this dissertational study into context.

Since the Reformation of the sixteenth century, theological studies became increasingly departmentalized into a variety of specialized disciplines, such as biblical studies, church history, dogmatics. During the seventeen and eighteenth centuries, these various disciplines evolved into a standard fourfold pattern of theological disciplines; Bible, church history, dogmatics, and practical theology. In this scheme, practical theology was an umbrella discipline for a variety of applied ministerial activities; including preaching, catechetics, and pastoral care.

In 1811, Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote the now classical book, Brief Outline of the Study of Theology, as a introductory guide for theological students. In his proposed organization of theological study, it was composed of three constituent parts: philosophical theology, historical theology, and practical theology. For Schleiermacher these three parts

are interdependent and yet have a sequential relationship. According to the 1811 edition of the Brief Outline, philosophical theology is the "root", historical theology is the "body", and practical theology is the "crown."¹⁰

⁹Edward Farley, "Interpreting Situations: An Inquiry into the Nature of Practical Theology," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 2-8.

¹⁰John E. Burkhardt, "Schleiermacher's Vision for Theology," Practical Theology, ed. Don S. Browning (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 43.

Two concerns that guided Schleiermacher in his Brief Outline were an attempt to give an unifying structure to the study of theology, and to focus theology on its one central concern, providing guidance to the practical concerns and happenings in the church. It was in the realization that there needed to be a strong interrelationship between theological study, and the living events of the church community that practical theology was seen as the crown of theological study. While this work places Schleiermacher in a pivotal place in the history of practical theology, it also had its drawbacks.

In his own Brief Outline, however, Schleiermacher's actual discussion of "practical theology" does come as something of an anticlimax. It is, in a word, sketchy. Of course, as he notes, there were not too many good models to follow, for much of the earlier work in practical theology had been "very uneven". Despite this, nonetheless, the real difficulty may reside in the way he defines and delineates the disciplines. For Schleiermacher, insofar as philosophical and historical theology have done their work properly and sufficiently, nothing seriously theoretical remains to be done. Practical theology is practical, not theoretical. In a word, he seems to have no theory for practical theology. Its tasks, which are tasks of application, are given it from philosophical and historical theology....Practical theology, therefore, simply studies and indicates the appropriate rules, procedures, and methods to be used in overcoming the gap between the ideal and the actual. Its tasks are not hermeneutical but technological. Indeed, for Schleiermacher, practical theology is basically a "technology."¹¹

Thus, while Schleiermacher held a strong appreciation for the need to relate theological formulations with the "doings" of lived activity, his work did not provide an unified, purposeful

¹¹Burkhardt, 48-49. Emphasis added.

method for doing practical theology. As Farley indicates, the seminaries of the nineteenth century continued to view the field of practical theology as a grouping of ministerial training in specific vocational areas, and in this way "clericalized" practical theology, narrowing and dividing its influence.

A fairly clear consensus was obtained in the nineteenth-century literature on practical theology, Continental and North American. Negatively, it was agreed that practical theology did not include ethics and issues of social and individual moral life. Positively, the consensus consigned to practical theology five subdisciplines: homiletics, catechetics, liturgics, church jurisprudence and polity, and pastoral care.¹²

This applied vocational training emphasis to practical theology lasted well into the twentieth century, and is often referred to as the "hints and tips" period. During this past century, however, there has been an increasing rise in the interest in the function of praxis as a scientific discipline of its own accord. There has been a growing awareness that the reflective study of present human activity is a powerful tool of the scientific endeavor; one that can inform and challenge philosophical, economic, social, and even theological formulations. Marxist use of praxis has been one of the pivotal influences in this movement. Some of the significant persons who have begun to raise this concern in the life of the church have been Gerd Otto, Norbert Mette, and Johann Metz in Europe, Gustavo Gutierrez and Juan Segundo in South America, and David Tracy and Don Browning in the United States. The effect of this

¹²Farley, 3-4.

current influence is the creating of a new direction in practical theology, and indeed in theology as a whole. J. A. Whyte wrote in 1973, in England, about this new direction.

I wish to suggest that the new direction in Practical Theology is diametrically opposed to the above approach - the "hints and tips" approach - to the subject. Practical Theology must be understood itself as the theology of practice, and as such a properly academic inquiry. The subject matter of this inquiry is not what is said, but what is done, as an expression of faith. The data of Practical Theology are not the verbal formulations, the ideas, the language in which people express their faith (or their unbelief), for these are the concern of philosophical or systematic theology, but the activities, the practices, the institutions, the structures of life and of relationships which are, or purport to be, the outcome, embodiment or expression of their faith or unbelief. this is a theoretical inquiry, in so far as it seeks to understand practice, to evaluate, to criticize, to look at the relationship between what is done and what is said or professed.¹³

This new and current direction of viewing practical theology as a formative theology and not just an applied theology, with the science of praxis at its core, is bringing challenges to traditional practices of the church, to the way in which our seminaries teach theology, and even to central fibers of our social and political structures. Note the spirit of the following three quotes, all being made in the 1980s.

There seems to be a growing hunger to make theology in general more relevant to the guidance of action and to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thought and life, the classic theological disciplines and practical theology.¹⁴

¹³J. A. Whyte, "New Directions in Practical Theology," Theology 76, no. 635 (May 1973): 229. Emphasis added.

¹⁴Browning, ed., 3.

Practical theology may actually turn out to be the place of meeting of all the different disciplines and experiences that make up "theology" in the larger sense of the term. If the practical field were strong enough politically and intellectually to stand at the heart of the theological enterprise, its members together might call upon (even hire and fire) specialists in the other areas as they seemed needed for whatever inquiry was afoot at the time!¹⁵

Doing practical theology is neither an emergency maneuver nor a temporary burden in Christian life; it is our life, how we do, who we are. It is in such activities that we identify ourselves and imagine our religious tradition's future.¹⁶

Current Developments in Practical Theology

As can be seen in the above historical discussion, the discipline of practical theology is currently in an exciting, developing, transitional period. New possibilities are being explored, new methods suggested, and as always, new issues are being debated. This section will detail some of these significant developments and issues. First, I will discuss three common themes important to the field of practical theology: the content of study in practical theology, the circular process of practical theology, and the nature of critical reflection in practical theology. Then, I will summarize the current debate over several important issues related to practical theology: the issue of correlation, the relationship of practical theology to Christian ethics, and the relationship of practical theology to other scientific disciplines.

¹⁵Mudge and Poling, 63. Emphasis added.

¹⁶James D. Whitehead, "The Practical Play of Theology," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 48. Emphasis added.

Common Themes in Current Practical Theology

Content of study. In defining practical theology in Chapter 1, I stated that it is the reflective study of human actions, both individual and corporate. In defining praxis, I further clarified this stating that the activity of praxis is to observe human action and then push behind this action to the motivations, systematic context, and results of the action. Throughout my readings in practical theology, the theologians are constantly attempting to bring similar descriptive focus to the content of what is being studied. To declare that the content is human action is certainly true enough; but such a statement is so general, that when it stands alone, it is almost void of helpful meaning (much like the critique that the concept of love alone is an inadequate ethical norm). Thus, there is a common endeavor to give some further focus to the content of practical theological study. Here are some of the suggestions.

Anton Boisen, the founding force behind the Clinical Pastoral Education movement, challenged theological seminaries in 1926 to train their clergy to become better prepared to work not only with books, but also with "living human documents."¹⁷ Paul Tillich challenged theologians in the 1950s to do theology by following a process of correlation, in which existential questions are correlated with theological answers.¹⁸

¹⁷Anton T. Boisen, "The Challenge to Our Seminaries," Christian Work 120 (1926): 111-112. Reprinted in Journal of Pastoral Care 5 (1951): 8-12.

¹⁸Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

Both of these approaches focus upon the existential experiences of human beings, and attempt to move beneath these experiences to the underlying area of human meanings, symbols, ideas, and self-understandings. Following in this direction, one content focus of practical theology is on viewing human activity from an existential viewpoint, and attempting to filter out common themes of existence (meanings, symbols, self-understandings), and then interplay these critical human themes with the traditions of the faith. This approach is fairly common today, and can be represented by this statement of Charles Winquist.

The third movement (of a practical theological enterprise) is a re-collection of experience that draws from tradition and history symbols and ideas that can elaborate interpretations on the deeper levels...The third movement is a construction and the making of meaning. It is an imaginal thinking magnifying the context of life and even the context of our deeply personal stories.¹⁹

A different suggestion about what to study in the area of human action has been put forward by the liberation theologians. As has been shown, Segundo is also studying human action in order to discover underlying themes, but rather than existential themes of human meaning and symbols, he is looking for political and economical themes in what he calls the ideological superstructure.²⁰ Rebecca Chopp, an American advocate of the

¹⁹Charles E. Winquist, "Re-visioning Ministry: Postmodern Reflection," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 34. Emphasis added.

²⁰Segundo, 9.

challenges being made by the liberation theologians, summarized this difference in content:

in the liberal-revisionist model...the underlying presupposition is that the primary referent for praxis is intentional human activity.

It is this intentional activity as the primary referent for praxis that liberation theology challenges. Liberation theologians, in a manner similar to some contemporary philosophers, wonder if praxis is not better understood in a broader sense of the web of social interactions. This web might be traced through three factors: contemporary retrievals of Aristotle and Marx, a theory of structuration combining anthropology and social structure, and attention to unintended consequences and effects.²¹

In this way, the liberation theologians are doing practical theology, but are using a different grid or perspective in their content of study. Rather than looking for underlying meanings, they are looking for underlying motives and systems of a sociopolitical nature. This difference in perspective will reemerge during the discussion of correlation.

Edward Farley has attempted to deal with this issue of content by organizing human action into situations and argues that this is the main focus of all practical theology, regardless if one then seeks for underlying existential meaning or sociopolitical motives. He defines a situation in this way:

A situation is the way various items, powers, and events in the environment gather together so as to require responses from participants....Situations can be very brief in time (such as a thunderstorm or a marital quarrel) or very protracted (such as the Western epoch, the nuclear age). They can also be very local (the situation of a specific family) or very

²¹Rebecca S. Chopp, "Practical Theology and Liberation," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 132-133. Emphasis added.

global (the ecological situation of our planet). Hence, local and brief situations can occur within broader and more enduring situations. Participants in situations need not be simply individuals. Groups, communities, collectives, societies all exist in situations. Hence, it is equally proper to explore the situation of a congregation, a denomination, or the church universal.²²

According to Farley, the real battle about what theology is to study is not between the liberation-type and individualist-existential stances, but to make all theology actively practical.

...theology is intrinsically problematic because it fails to address the primacy and integrity of the individual human self, the church's actual situation, the concreteness of living language, the minister's pathos, the world's politics and oppressions. The targets of the complaints are theologians, the theological schools, the churches, the present generation of believers....Liberation-type criticisms are directed at individualist-existential stances. Political theology aims criticism at ministers and churches whose orientation is social maintenance and legitimation.... The complaints resemble each other in one respect. They all have to do with the relation or disrelation of faith and its institutions to actual, problematic, contemporary reality. In other words they have to do with situations; thus, situations of action, church, the individual, the ministry.²³

Lewis Mudge provides a similar suggestion to Farley, but rather than speaking about situations, he uses the insights from semiotic theory, and refers to signs. In semiotic theory, human culture is seen as a vast communication network in which there is developed a set of codes (signs) along with rules for using them. Each person is born into an already existing societal sign network, and also generates his or her own inner sign network. To understand the workings of any particular

²²Ibid, 12. Emphasis added.

²³Ibid, 8-9. Emphasis added.

person or society, one must identify the significant signs of that network, and attempt to understand the meanings given to these signs, how they are used in order to communicate, and the rules and regulations that are developed for using the signs. As these signs are interconnected in this vast communication system, one is able to see the interconnections between the individual, the community, and the society as a whole. In this way meanings and symbols are not exclusively existential or sociopolitical, but exist as part of a systemic whole. Changes at one level creates changes at all levels.

The world will have been opened to new possibilities through the use of metaphors that capture the reconfiguring of signs in parabolic and narrative forms. Through such metaphors, the faith community sees new openings for creative witnessing stretching ahead into the future....We should thus be able to transcend the distinction between those versions of practical theology that focus on the 'ekklesia' as such, and those for which the field of action is the whole human community.²⁴

I believe that the discipline of practical theology will be well served if it avoids an either/or battle over its content of study being either existential meanings and symbols or sociopolitical motives and systems; but rather takes an inclusive approach -- such as Farley's use of situations, or Mudge's use of signs and interlocking communication networks -- and legitimizes a variety of interpreting styles, including both individual and systemic styles.

²⁴Lewis S. Mudge, "Toward an Ecclesial Hermeneutic," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 116.

Circular process. Along with deciding what is to be studied, another common theme in the emerging systems of practical theology is the circular nature of the practical theological process. This has already been demonstrated with the discussion on Segundo's Hermeneutic Circle. The circular nature of practical theology is two-fold. On the one level, it is circular in that its process is one of dialogue -- a dialogue between the situations of current human events and the theological formulations that guide the faith. On the second level, practical theology is circular in that it not only studies and takes its agenda from human action, but if effective, it will also put some new energy and direction back into human action. And as Segundo's model indicates, when this new energy impacts the human situation, the circle, rather than being completed, needs to begin again. In this sense, the task of practical theology continually circulates in and out of human situations, in a constant dialogue between these situations and the traditions of the faith.

This understanding of the circular nature of practical theology is shared by its many proponents, including Schleiermacher, who saw a "perpetual dialectic between the historical manifestations of Christianity and the evolving canon of true Christianity by which a church and its theologians are guided."²⁵ Lewis Mudge and James Poling described this dialectic as the

²⁵Richard R. Niebuhr, "Schleiermacher: Theology as Human Reflection," Harvard Theological Review 60, no. 1 (Jan. 1962): 36.

interweaving of the activities of formation and reflection.²⁶ James Whitehead referred to practical theology as "the interplay of three authorities, the Christian tradition, cultural information, and personal experience."²⁷ And J. A. Whyte wrote "In theology the study of the practice illuminates the theological understanding itself. Reflection and action are thus intimately interwoven."²⁸

This circular dialogue is often referred to and discussed as the dialogue between theory (the reflection mode, the Christian theology), and practice (the formation mode, human action in situations). The current practical theologians seem to be in agreement that one of the crucial changes needed in contemporary theological education is a change in the way in which we understand the relationship between theory and practice. The call is to move away from linear understandings in which theological education is taught as being one-directional, moving from theory into practice; and to move towards a circular understanding of the theory/practice relationship. Thomas Ogletree makes such a call in his article on the dimensions of practical theology.

What we need is a reconstruction of our understandings of the relation of theory and practice in our theological work, and of the distinctions and connections between theoretical and practical knowledge that figure in that relation....They belong to an ongoing rhythm of distancing and immersion in human knowing, doing, and being. By using such language, we correct the ten-

²⁶Mudge and Poling, eds., xiv.

²⁷Whitehead, 37. Emphasis added.

²⁸Whyte, 238.

dencies of modern thought to conceive dichotomies where polar tensions and dialectical interactions are in view. We challenge, for example, the all too common split in understanding between the theoretical and the practical, the objective and the subjective, fact and value. When we fall victim to such dichotomies, we tend as well to depreciate the latter terms of these pairs to a lower status in human understanding: mere practical application, mere subjectivity, mere value preferences. The aim is to grasp their role in the dynamics of human understanding.²⁹

The person who has most directly attacked this linear concept of theory and practice is Thomas Groome. He has criticized what he calls the "from theory-to-practice" mind-set, which he evaluates as presuming a "trickle-down" process, which he describes in this way:

The people at the top have the knowledge wealth that is to spill over on the baptized but non-theological trained Christians below. In the theory-to-practice paradigm, theology is done either for the people or to the people....the fact that theology is also to be done by the people seems to be forgotten.³⁰

Groome gives the following example to illustrate the undesirable effect of this theory-to-practice model:

The celebrant was a young, newly ordained priest. I know the seminary in which he had been trained to be a very fine one "academically." That he had read widely in church history, contemporary theology, and critical biblical scholarship, I had no doubt. I waited in anticipation for a fine sermon. I was thoroughly disappointed. The sermon would be charitably described as a collection of pious platitudes that bore no relation to the struggles, joys, and life

²⁹Thomas W. Ogletree, "Dimensions of Practical Theology: Meaning, Action, Self," Practical Theology, ed. Don S. Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 84, 86.

³⁰Thomas Groome, "Theology on Our Feet: A Revisionist Pedagogy for Healing the Gap between Academia and Ecclesia," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 57.

realities of the congregation.³¹

In the emergence of the current interest in practical theology with its emphasis upon a circular process Groome sees a needed correction to this linear relationship between theory and practice.

While the theory-to-practice paradigm is still reigning (especially in how we teach theology), there are significant signs that we are in the twilight days of its rule. A whole new paradigm for doing theology and this theological education is emerging....this new paradigm is a retrieval of historical praxis as an authentic partner in knowing and understanding God's self-disclosure to us and the meaning of that disclosure for our lives in the world. This new paradigm promises to broaden the locus of theology beyond academia to the church in the world; to expand its participants to include all of God's people in faith; and to widen its interlocutors to include other sciences of human investigation. In essence, it does this by a new modus operandi that maintains a dialectical unity between praxis and theory instead of the "from theory-to-practice" mode.³²

So, a common theme of this new emphasis upon practical theology is this new way of viewing the theory/practice relationship. It may be called the formation/reflection process, relating human action and Christian theology, or the science of praxis. Whatever it is called, it is pointing to the central characteristic of practical theology of being a circular, continuous dialogue of faith.

The process of critical reflection. A third common theme in current developments in practical theology is the central place that the process of critical reflection holds in this

³¹Ibid, 56.

³²Ibid, 63-64. Emphasis added.

contemporary emphasis upon practical theology as praxis. As seen in the last section on the circular nature of practical theology, the circle moves continuously through cycles of formation and reflection. The reflection cycle is at the heart of our understanding of praxis, for as Browning points out: "The difference between practice and praxis is that in the latter the theory has been made self-conscious and reflected upon critically."³³ Howard Grimes said it this way in 1977: "In short, practical theology is the critical reflection on the life and ministry of the church from the perspective of the Christian witness of faith as it relates to all of God's creation."³⁴

Indeed, one can argue while the circular process of practical theology can be found in everyone's living, questioning, and faith developing (see discussion on page 27), it is in training and strengthening one's ability to do critical reflection that a person moves this faith activity to the level of legitimate practical theology. Given this importance of the process of critical reflection, it is not surprising that many of the practical theologians on the current scene have attempted to make a definitive statement about this process in order to explain their viewpoint upon the critical aspects of this reflective process. While much more has been written on the place and nature of critical reflection within practical theology than can be summarized here, I will discuss six specific

³³Browning, ed., 13. Emphasis added.

³⁴Howard Grimes, "What is Practical Theology?" Perkins Journal 30 (Spring 1977): 36.

descriptions which have been given to this process -- suspicion, retrieval, leaping, critical reason, analytic memory, and creative imagination -- as a way of expanding and informing our understanding of this process.

We have already met the concept of critical reflection as suspicion in the work of Segundo, with his call for ideological suspicion and exegetical suspicion. By suspicion he means being open to question and re-think existing perspectives, and to examine and give consideration to new perspectives. It is his hope, and of the liberation theologians in general, that a willingness to be suspicious about our social and political structures, the cultural ideas and beliefs that support them, and the faith interpretations that exist in harmony with them will lead us to challenge and change inadequate and inhuman social structures, and similarly to challenge and change inadequate and insensitive faith interpretations. In this way, such critical reflection as suspicion will

force us to change our customary conceptions of life, death, knowledge, society, politics, and the world in general. Only a change of this sort, or at the very least a pervasive suspicion about our ideas and value judgments concerning those things, will enable us to reach the theological level and force theology to come back down to reality and ask itself new and decisive questions.³⁵

Suspicion is not the sole property of the liberation theologians, however. Any credible system of critical reflection needs an emphasis upon suspicion, question-asking, and an

³⁵Segundo, 8.

openness to seek new answers. This is the only way the Christian Tradition will be kept alive and relevant in the ever-changing human history. David Tracy, a well-respected theologian in current American theological circles, speaks of critical reflection as a combination of retrieval and critique-suspicion. About the need for suspicion he has written that

the theologian recognizes the need [for]....a hermeneutics of both critique and suspicion for every religious and cultural tradition. Every great work of civilization, as Walter Benjamin reminds us, is also a work of barbarism. Every great religious tradition (as the prophetic-reformatory core of Judaism and Christianity should also remind us) has produced radically ambiguous effects. Consider, for example, the central symbol of Christianity, the Christ symbol. That symbol has produce in its history of effects not only the healing, disclosive, and transformative reality of genuine religious redemption for millions but sometimes has produced, unintentionally to be sure but no less fatally, anti-Semitism, sexism, class prejudice, racism, and an arrogant exclusivism.³⁴

Tracy combines this hermeneutics of critique-suspicion with a hermeneutic of retrieval. Retrieval is the process of studying the classic writings, symbols, events, and images that make up one's cultural and religious traditions in order to unpack and re-discover the wisdom that is within the classic formulation. Thus, Tracy would argue that while every classic formulation has negative elements of which one needs to be suspicious, at the same time, every classic formulation contains some truth and wisdom which ought not to be lost. This process of retrieval has as its goal the mining of these truths and wisdom, and

³⁴David Tracy, "The Foundations of Practical Theology," Practical Theology, ed. Don S. Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 70.

redefining them within the current culture. Twentieth-century biblical scholarship, with its emphasis upon historical and form criticism is an example of the retrieval process. Tracy sees the dynamics of retrieval and suspicion working together in the reflective process, even to the point where by being suspicious, one is often led to retrieving some ancient, lost wisdom.

The need, therefore, for both hermeneutics of retrieval and hermeneutics of critique-suspicion (indeed, often retrieval of half-forgotten or repressed aspects and classic memories of the tradition through critique and suspicion) is grounded in the realization that every disclosure of truth in every classic is at the same time a concealment. That same need is also warranted on inner-theological grounds. It is warranted by both the mystical and the prophetic strains in the Christian tradition insofar as both demand constant self-criticism and self-reform.³⁷

Putting this material together with the information about the content of what practical theology studies, one can argue that the critical reflection of practical theology is the using the hermeneutics of retrieval and suspicion in an interaction with the situations and significant signs of one's culture and faith.

James Whitehead has given us another interesting descriptive pattern by which to conceptualize this process of critical reflection. He uses Erik Erikson's analysis of "leaping" for developing a system to guide critical reflection. Erikson, in Toys and Reasons³⁸ follows Plato's suggestion that play originates in the random leap of the child, and in analyzing this

³⁷Tracy, 70. Emphasis added.

³⁸Erik Erikson, Toys and Reasons: Stages in the Ritualization of Experience (New York: Norton, 1977).

activity, develops three distinct characteristics to the leap. First, the child leaps out of delight. Second, the child leaps in order to challenge gravity and the "givenness" of life, to "test the leeway." Third, to leap is to fall, to come back to earth.

Whitehead compares the process of critical reflection with this process of leaping, and states that like leaping, critical reflection is done out of delight, in order to test the leeway, and to experience falling. It is done / out of delight because reflecting (as question-asking and answer-seeking), often seen as a burden or an emergency, is actually an on-going part of life, and "may become more of a delight as we learn to savor the leaping itself and become more comfortable with and skilled at the accompanying falls."²⁹ It is done to test the leeway in order to contest the leeway, or limits, between our religious traditions and our contemporary living. In this way, testing the leeway is very similar to the retrieval and suspicion interplay.

Finally, in the doing the leaping of critical reflecting we are destined to fall, leap, and fall again. This is an important contribution to our concept of critical reflection, for it speaks to the reality that no developed thought, argument, or belief statement will ever fully grasp the final truth, or be completed. We leap at understanding the truth, and at bettering our society; never fully arriving, and always needing to leap again and again.

²⁹Whitehead, 48.

Whitehead concluded his remarks with these thoughts:

Practicing theology is hard work and serious business. But it is much more than that: it is our play with God's creation. In the corporate reflection that shapes and defends our life of shared faith, we not only hold onto past truths; we re-imagine them. And we test the leeway between gospel and experience, between our high ideals and a doable life. In the midst of this invigorating play, we fall again and again - not such an unlikely fate in a religious tradition developed under the shadow of a cross. Doing the theology of our daily lives, we play out a drama that is both ancient and novel: it has been done before, but never in quite this way.⁴⁰

Thomas Groome, a religious educator, has defined critical reflection as having three components, which are the last three of our descriptive characteristics; critical reason, analytical memory, and creative imagination. Through critical reason people are invited to ask why things are the way they are. It uses human reason to question present realities, and is according to Groome, a hermeneutic of suspicion. Analytical memory "invites people to uncover the personal and social genesis of present praxis to see the constitutive interests, assumptions, and ideologies which undergird that praxis as they have named it."⁴¹ These characteristics sound fairly similar to the concepts of retrieval (analytical memory) and suspicion (critical reason), and in terms of this study will be understood as referring to a similar process.

It is in the third characteristic, creative imagination that an additional contribution to the definition of critical reflection is being made. Groome describes creative imagination

⁴⁰Ibid, 52-53.

⁴¹Groome, 71.

as the invitation to "image and create new possibilities beyond present praxis instead of simply accepting it fatalistically as a given."⁴² This creative imagination relates to the other aspects of critical reason and analytical memory in the following way:

The purpose of attending to the present with reason and memory is that we may intend the future. Such intentionality requires an envisioning of the consequences of present praxis and an imagining of what is not yet but might be. By bringing reason, memory, and imagination to reflect critically on their own present praxis, the participants come to express and critique what we can call metaphorically their own "stories" and "visions."⁴³

Creative imagination is the creative process of taking the learnings, insights, and hunches gained through retrieval, suspicion, and testing the leeways, and though knowing that one will fall, being willing to risk the fall in order to create new traditions, formulations, and theologies. It is here that critical reflection comes to fruition; and this reflection is ready to move back into formation, completing the circle of experiencing human life, reflecting upon this experience critically, and then influencing the experience with the results of our reflection.

This, then, has been a discussion of some of the common themes in contemporary practical theology. Its focus is the concept of praxis, a circular process in which the activities of critical reflection and continual formation move us through a

⁴²Ibid, 71.

⁴³Ibid, 71-2.

never ending dance with life's situations and signs (be they cultural and religious traditions, existential meanings and symbols, or social and political systems), with the dance steps being retrieving, suspecting, testing, imaging, changing, falling.

However, as with any discipline, not everyone dances with the same style or to the same beat. Concerns and issues are being debated, and I wish to summarize the debate surrounding three of these issues.

Current Issues in Practical Theology

The issue of correlation. If one attempts to do any reading in the area of contemporary practical theology, they will undoubtedly encounter a discussion about the issue of correlation. In the previous section, I summarized the common theme of a circular process in practical theology, and how this circular activity was often depicted as a continual dialogue between theory and practice. As practical theologians attempt to speak about how this dialogue between theory and practice takes place, they tend to speak about critical reflection and about correlation.

The term correlation has been popular in Western Christian theology since the work of Tillich. In 1975 David Tracy wrote a groundbreaking book entitled Blessed Rage for Order, in which he built upon the work of Tillich and advocated a theological

methodology that he described as a "revised correlation model."⁴⁴

The first of the following two quotes, both by Don Browning, gives the historical context and development of the concept of correlation in modern Christian theology, and the second is a definitional description of Tracy's revised correlational model as it might be used in practical theology.

Tracy's revised correlational method is not new to the precincts of practical theology, for it is in practical theology that the church has its most direct interaction with the secular world. Clearly, an early version of this theological method can be found in the practical theologies of Daniel Day Williams and Seward Hiltner. Most theologically trained persons are familiar with Paul Tillich's theological method which correlates questions arising from our existence as humans with answers that come forth from Christian revelation. Tracy's revised correlation method is less one-sided and more reciprocal; he believes in critically correlating both questions and answers that come from various secular or non-Christian interpretations of existence with various interpretations of the questions and answers conveyed in Christian revelation (what Tracy calls "the Christian fact").⁴⁵

In general terms a revised correlational program in practical theology attempts to correlate critically those questions and answers that are implicit in various interpretations of the central Christian witness and those questions and answers that are implicit in various interpretations of ordinary human experience.⁴⁶

Thus, Tillich popularized the term correlation to conceptualize the continual dialogue between the questions arising from life and the answers of the Christian faith. Tracy revised this

⁴⁴David Tracey, Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology (New York: Seabury, 1975).

⁴⁵Browning, ed., 5-6. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶Don Browning, Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 50. Emphasis added.

concept to include a more pluralistic dialogue. This dialogue is revised on two levels. On the one level Tracy argued that questions and answers exist on both sides of the correlation, so that contemporary existence may bring answers as well as questions (such as the current explosion in scientific knowledge), and the Christian revelation can create questions as well as answers. On a second level, Tracy insisted that the insights and concerns of secular and non-Christian experience be also brought into the dialogue, and become part of the correlation process.

As practical theology has been shown to be centrally concerned with creating mutual dialogue between human activity and theological understandings, where our theology shapes and is shaped by our reflective study of individual and societal situations and signs; it can be seen how this concept of a revised correlation model fits well with the essentially circular process of practical theology with its emphases upon a concept of praxis which creates a dialectical unity between theory and practice. Because of this, the revised correlation model is referred to often in current practical theological writings, and most of these theologians would agree with Browning when he wrote concerning what model of practical theology to use: "It is my conviction that for our time it should be a revised correlational model of practical theology."⁴⁷

⁴⁷Don Browning, "Practical Theology and Religious Education," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 79.

However, not all agree. The liberation theologians tend to argue that the revised correlation model has remained bound in the existential emphasis of Tillich, and thus, remain focused upon issues of individual meaning and faith concerns, while the suffering of our world cry out for relief. Rebecca Chopp strongly represents this viewpoint in her book The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies, and in an article written for a practical theology seminar, entitled "Practical Theology and Liberation." Chopp argues that

the method of correlation as the route for practical theology is nothing more than a new "play" on the old tag game of liberal, progressive theology that posits an underlying unity between individuals and tradition, and believes that it can reconcile, through understanding, human experience to reality.⁴⁸

The heart of Chopp's criticism is that from this revised correlation existential perspective, the practical experience most often reflected upon is that "of white, bourgeois males,"⁴⁹ and when it speaks of tradition, this perspective most often means "the classical texts favored by the educated, male clerics and theologians of the church."⁵⁰ The result is that while the users of this model feel like they are being pluralistic and universal, in reality their liberal-revisionist world-view causes them to limit their work to those perspectives which fit their "bourgeois existence."⁵¹

⁴⁸Chopp, 120. Emphasis added.

⁴⁹Ibid, 130.

⁵⁰Ibid, 130.

⁵¹Ibid, 121.

In contrast to the revised correlation model, Chopp offers a different methodological model for practical theology:

Liberation theology opts for a method best called a critical praxis correlation which includes a de-idologization of scriptures, a pragmatic interpretation of experience, a critical theory of emancipation and enlightenment, and a social theory to transform praxis.⁵²

In analyzing what Chopp and the liberation theologians are saying, I do not detect any different process model. Both are models of correlation. What seems to be at issue is the content of what is being studied and correlated, and the central controversy seems to be the content issue discussed earlier -- is the content of study existential experiences and meanings or is it sociopolitical structures and strategies of change. Indeed, Chopp concludes her article by stating:

This is not, I hope, to deny the worthiness of practical theology in the method of correlation. It is to suggest that this method is limited, and in spite of its rhetorics of totality and universalism, is a situated and particular discursive practice that cannot do all things for all persons....As we deal with issues such as justice, pluralism, and other religions, the task may not be merely to understand, but to transform ourselves and our world.⁵³

Therefore, her main complaint with the revised correlational model is its current trapness in an existential, liberal-revisionist perspective. Interestingly enough, this is primarily the same critique that Dennis McCann makes of liberation theologians and their model of critical praxis correlation in his book Christian Realism and Liberation Theology: Practical

⁵²Ibid, 132. Emphasis added.

⁵³Ibid, 136.

Theologies in Creative Conflict. McCann argues that the critical praxis correlation method is faulty because it is trapped within a particular perspective, and that perspective being a Marxist analysis of social and political structures. McCann points out that Gustavo Gutierrez has referred to this method as orthopraxis which literally means "right praxis."

As a result, liberation theologians sometimes summarize their methodological innovation as a shift from criteria of orthodoxy to "orthopraxis". "Academic theology" is generated by a method based on a static conception of truth and committed to a standard of "right thinking" or "orthodoxy." Liberation theology is generated by a method committed to a dynamic conception of "right acting" or "orthopraxis," a concept which claims a biblical warrant in the theme of "doing the truth"...As interpreted by the Latin Americans, however, orthopraxis not only gives more legitimacy to participation in the struggle for liberation, but it also asserts the cognitive authority of such participation. In other words, those who participate in the struggle are in a better position to interpret the Word of the Lord than are the "armchair" theologians of the church.⁵⁴

And what is this position from which the Word of the Lord is interpreted?

...theological method will no longer be based exclusively on "epistemological" questions, but on an "economic and socio-cultural" mode of analysis capable of illuminating "every form of religious alienation." ...The "Word of the Lord," as Gutierrez sees it, is to serve as the inspiration for a criticism of tradition using Marxist modes of social analysis.⁵⁵

Based upon his analysis, McCann asks the question, "Does it (liberation theology's method of orthopraxis) check the tendency

⁵⁴Dennis P. McCann, Christian Realism and Liberation Theology: Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1982), 160.

⁵⁵McCann, Christian Realism, 159. Emphasis added.

toward "excessive spiritualization" only by promoting the "politicization" of Christian faith?"⁵⁶ While the liberal-revisionists and the liberation theologians will energetically debate this question, it seems fairly apparent to me that if Chopp's critique of the liberal-revisionists is valid, then McCann's critique of the liberation theologians is just as valid.

This issue of correlation, then, in which the debate is over the choice of a revised critical correlation versus a critical praxis correlation is not so much a debate over method as it is a debate over the underlying perspective within which essentially similar methods are trapped. It is actually a debate over the existential perspective of seeking understandings of self, meanings, symbols versus the sociopolitical perspective of a Marxist critique of the current economical social structures. This is the same debate we encountered when we explored the various contents of study.

The reason that this conflict exists seems to be tied to basic human nature in that human life is so complex that the human tendency, even among academicians, is to develop basic philosophical points of view, or life grids by which to interpret the continual barrage of experiential data that invades the senses. Thus, it is not surprising to find one group accusing another of being overly existential and bourgeois, or of being politicized.

⁵⁶Dennis McCann, "Practical Theology and Social Action," Practical Theology, ed. Don S. Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 111.

However, this is not necessarily a problem, but may be part of the solution. One way of living effectively with the complexities of human reality and the tendency towards partisan dogmatism is to encourage the speaking and dialogue of many different voices. For as the opinions of these varying voices challenge and critique one another, each leaping and falling only to leap and fall again, the community as a whole (and in this case, theological understanding) jerkily moves forward.

No one can fully escape their own life view or fully correlate all aspects of human life. So what becomes most important as a practical theologian is being able to clearly identify and proclaim your biases, and to clearly identify and proclaim those aspects of human life and traditions (or situations/theology, or practice/theory) that you are trying to correlate. David Tracy has stated this well in his article "Practical Theology in the Situation of Global Pluralism."

The particular needs and questions of particular local persons and communities should principally determine which way the "correlation" will go. Correlation, after all, is a word used to recall that, in any given situation, the demands of both the Christian tradition with its embodiment in particular ecclesial communities and the ever-shifting cultural, political, ethical, and religious situation must be allowed; hence, the phrase "mutually critical correlations." Sometimes the correlation may legitimately suggest a practical identity between those two interpretations (as in many forms of "liberal" theology). More often the correlation may suggest the presence of analogies (as similarities-in-difference) between two interpretations (as in much of the best of theologically informed pastoral counseling). At still other times, the correlation may demand the articulation not of identities or even analogies but radical nonidentities (as in the correctly confrontational style of much of political, liberation, and feminist practical

theologies).

In sum, there is nothing in the "revised correlational model" that demands a "liberal" solution. There is only the demand - the properly theological demand - that wherever and whoever the practical theologian is, she or he is bound by the very nature of the enterprise as theological to show how one interprets the tradition and how one interprets the present situation and how those two interpretations correlate: as either identities of meaning, analogies, or radical non-identities. Any one of these options is logically possible; only the particular question of particular individuals or groups in particular situations can decide what form the correlation must now take to prove both practical and theological or, more exactly, practical-theological. As always, a general method can only heuristically guide the inquiry; the subject matter alone - and that in all its particularity - must rule.⁵⁷

Another part of this issue is that as persons attempt to correlate various aspects of their environment, unless they have some clear, reasoned, objective guidance to this activity, there will be a tendency to follow preconceived beliefs and to develop rigid partisan perspectives. One needs clear, reasoned, and objective guidance for doing critical correlation, be it revised or critical praxis. The earlier discussion on critical reflection, I believe, provides such guidance. If one brings such critical reflection -- with its emphases upon the activities of retrieval, suspicion and testing the leeways, and creative imagination -- to their practical theological attempts of correlating; the results, while still biased and only touching a part of the truth, will nevertheless ring a more resounding note and be a stronger contribution to the theological enterprise.

⁵⁷David Tracy, "Practical Theology in the Situation of Global Pluralism," Formation and Reflection, eds. Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 139-40.

Practical theology and Christian ethics. A second issue in contemporary practical theology is the relationship between practical theology and Christian ethics. In the discussion above, the point has just been made that we need clear, reasoned, and objective guidance to our attempts at critical correlation, in order to minimize the natural human tendency towards biases and partisan dogmatism. One method for developing this guidance is an agreed upon understanding of the specific procedures involved in critical reflection. Several current practical theologians are arguing that another method for developing this type of guidance is to interrelate our attempts at practical theology with the field of Christian ethics. In this section, I will summarize the proposals of two of these practical theologians, Don Browning and Dennis McCann.

Ever since writing The Moral Context of Pastoral Care in 1976, Don Browning has been known for promoting the importance of guiding Christian action within the context of a tradition of practical moral rationality.⁵⁸ In 1983 he clarified his understanding of this moral tradition with his book, Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care. In this book, summarizing a series of articles, Browning has evolved a theory of practical moral rationality, which he argues can give objective guidance to our practical theological efforts. He calls this theory the "five levels of practical moral thinking."⁵⁹ In the following,

⁵⁸Don S. Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976).

⁵⁹Browning, Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care, 53.

Browning explains the rationale for these five levels:

The five levels of practical moral rationality follow from the five primary questions we invariably ask ourselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, when circumstances force a moral issue upon us. The questions are phrased here as they would be put, not to individuals, but to communities, and especially the church as a community of moral discourse: (1) What kind of world or universe constitutes the ultimate context of our action? (2) What are we obligated to do? (3) Which of all our human tendencies and need are we morally justified in satisfying? (4) What is the immediate context of our action and the various factors which condition it? (5) What specific roles, rules, and processes of communication should we follow in order to accomplish our moral ends?⁴⁰

It is from these five moral questions, according to Browning, that his five levels of practical moral rationality are created. His definitive description of these five levels is found in the following:

The five questions generate five levels of practical moral thinking. These can be identified as follows: (1) a metaphorical level, (2) an obligational level, (3) a tendency-need level, (4) a contextual-predictive level, and (5) a rule-role level.

The metaphorical level deals with the various metaphorical and symbolic ways we use to represent the ultimate context of experience; it is the most distinctively and formally religious level, although practical religions always have convictions and make judgments and statements at all five levels. The obligational level is the most distinctively moral level. The tendency-need level tries to answer the question as to what humans want and what they need and value - in the nonmoral (although not necessarily immoral) sense of those terms. The contextual-predictive level tries to specify the common sociological, psychological, and cultural trends which are likely to condition our actions and their consequences. And finally, the rule-role level tries to articulate the concrete rules, roles, and processes of communication necessary to construct a world according to the visions, obligations, and possibilities opened up at the higher

⁴⁰Ibid., 53.

levels.⁶¹

Having detailed these five levels of practical moral thinking, Browning then relates them to practical theology, by discussing the four steps of practical theological action (which are very similar to the circular steps involved in a model of praxis, such as the hermeneutic circle, and the movements of correlation between practice and theory discussed earlier).

...practical theological action goes through four steps: (1) a step of experiencing and initially defining the problem; (2) a step of attention, listening, and understanding; (3) a step of critical analysis and comparison; and (4) a step of decision and strategy. In terms of this four-step sequence, moving through the five levels of practical moral thinking... is properly a part of step three. It involves the kind of analysis and comparison that is required in order critically to reestablish the goal of care.⁶²

Browning believes that the five levels of moral thinking affect all four steps of practical theological action, and sees them most related to step three, which is the creative reflection/correlation step. Elsewhere, when summarizing his thoughts from a longer discourse, he even seems to be suggesting that the five levels can themselves act as a model for doing practical theology (a type of hermeneutic circle).

...nor do I mean that we always start with the higher or more basic questions (levels one and two) and systematically go down from there. In fact, we probably generally back into the higher questions as we gradually move from the problem we are confronting (level five - the rule/role action level) to a more theoretical analysis of how we are presently thinking, and...then move backward in an effort to uncover our grounding assumptions to a fuller analysis of the higher levels of

⁶¹Ibid., 54-55.

⁶²Ibid., 99-100.

moral thinking....when judgments at these higher four levels are made, then we should have new critical perspectives from which to test and possibly transform the rules and roles of our present praxis. This is what a revised correlational approach to shared praxis in Christian education is all about.⁴³

While these additional comments help to demonstrate the multi-levels of interpretations that one can begin to develop when trying to create models which capture the complexities of practical theological activity; the central aim to Browning's proposal is that when one is doing the critical reflection step in their practical theological activities, that these reflections be guided by these five important moral levels (or questions). By doing so, a theologian is reminded to consider a wider context (a context that not only considers moral questions; but also a context that, because of the varied nature of these questions, contains both existential and systemic concerns), and thus, the theologian is less vulnerable to overly focusing upon a single interpretation or taking a partisan view.

Dennis McCann has made a similar proposal in his comparison of the theological approaches of Christian realism and liberation theology. As seen in the previous section, he critiqued liberation theology and its "orthopraxis" as being driven by a single and pre-accepted perspective. In contrast, he gave a positive assessment to Christian realism, because of its middle axioms approach. In Christian realism, as represented by John C. Bennett and Reinhold Niebuhr, the over-riding ethical goal is the

⁴³Browning, "Practical Theology and Religious Education," 89, 92.

"fullness of the Kingdom of God."⁶⁴ In attempting to be faithful to the fullness of the Kingdom, this approach formulates a method that progresses from guiding principles to middle axioms to particular programs. Bennett defines these three stages of ethical progression as being:

Guiding principles about which there could be no disagreement; a middle axiom which had behind it a substantial consensus but which related Christian decision to concrete reality...about which there could be considerable debate, and finally support of a particular program which was even more ambiguous and about which there was less agreement.⁶⁵

As an illustration of these stages, McCann has suggested that a guiding principle might be "solidarity with the world's oppressed" as this reflects the faith of prophetic Christianity. From this guiding principle several different middle axioms might be formulated, such as revolutionary socialism or democratic developmentalism. From these perspectives, a wide variety of concrete particular programs could be developed.⁶⁶

In this way, there is not a call for universal agreement, but for all particular programs to be based ultimately (through their relationship with developed middle axioms) upon prophetic Christianity. Like Browning's five levels of practical moral thinking, it gives both the individual and the Church community specific stages to follow as reflection is taking place, which link individual issues with broader ethical frameworks. McCann

⁶⁴McCann, "Practical Theology and Social Action," 115.

⁶⁵John C. Bennett, Christian Ethics and Social Policy (New York: Schribner's Sons, 1959), 79. Emphasis added.

⁶⁶McCann, "Practical Theology and Social Action," 116.

discusses the benefits of such linking in the following:

By distinguishing clearly these three stages of critical reflection (guiding principles, middle axioms, and particular programs), the "hermeneutic circle," in this model becomes at once more nuanced and more stable. As the metaphor of "progression" suggests, it now looks more like a spiral.

There are important theoretical and practical consequences to be noted. Theoretically, this "hermeneutic circle" ensures that the relationship between practical theology and social action always proceeds through the discipline of social ethics. Instead of allowing "praxis" to determine the meaning and tasks of theology, here theology provides a framework in which social practices and actions all lumped together as "praxis" may be subjected to ethical analysis. Christian social ethics, in other words, takes its place in model as an indispensable form of self-criticism....Certain practical consequences follow from the capacity for self-criticism built into the middle axioms approach. Since it reflects the limits and possibilities symbolized by "prophetic Christianity," in principle it remains alert to the spiritual risks involved in social activism. By refusing to compromise the transcendence of the Kingdom of God, this approach clearly draws the line between "politicization" and authentic response to the "Christian social imperative." But just as clearly, it draws the line on "excessive spiritualization." Middle axioms continue to be proposed, criticized, and revised not just in spite of, but precisely because of, the ambiguities experienced in social action (as with any of phase of Christian living, as well). In short, this approach does help sustain mutual accountability, because its "hermeneutic circle" remains open to the religious and moral wisdom of "prophetic Christianity."⁶⁷

Thus, McCann is proposing that prophetic Christianity (which demands that we always examine our present activity from the perspective of accepted Christian teachings about faithful, ethical living) act as broad ethical context, from which Christian individuals and communities attempt to formulate more specific principles and guidelines. Thus, when practical

⁶⁷Ibid., 117-18. Emphasis added.

theologians attempt to correlate practice with theory, the over-riding "theory" which takes precedence over all other theories is prophetic Christianity. Interpreting this keystone theory into modern ethical objectives (middle axioms) and particular programs or activities which relate to concrete human issues becomes the work of the Christian practical theologian.

Both Browning and McCann are attempting to give some methodological suggestions for aiding the critical reflection process, and arguing that there are some ethical questions and contexts in which this critical reflection needs to be done. These methodological suggestions seem to be related to what has been described in this paper as the activities of retrieval and suspicion.

In the process of retrieval, there has to be some agreed upon classic texts and principles (theories) from one is attempting to retrieve wisdom. The moral context of our faith, prophetic Christianity, constitute the classical ethical texts about human activity, from which contemporary guidance and wisdom can be retrieved. Browning's five levels of moral thinking give us some important questions for guiding this retrieval process. As we move from the rule/role level back to metaphorical level, we are guided into various areas of reflection which will engage us with classical material and formulations in order to seek insight for contemporary situations.

In the process of suspicion, these same ethical questions

can help us suspect and discover places where current activities are not in accord with the guiding principles of classical ethical texts. Likewise, a healthy suspicion will aid us keeping these classical guiding principles influential in human life, by challenging accepted theories (middle axioms) which have distorted their wisdom. Women will point that while the principle "Love your neighbor as yourself," is undisputably central to the Christian faith; there have existed, and continue to exist, many rules, regulations, practices, and beliefs which treat woman (as well as many other neighbors) with less than equal love and regard.

I find the work of Browning and McCann very beneficial in reminding us of the ethical context in which practical theology exists, and in providing us with some additional methodological tools for correlating our practice with this ethical context. The benefit of these tools is that they encourage the practical theologian to widen their theoretical perspectives, and not to narrowly rely on one favorite theory with which to interpret all situations. This is not only important in light of the various issues discussed in this chapter on practical theological method, but is essential in light of the highly critical issues facing the global human family today -- such as the unequal distribution of power and of the world's goods, the ecological crisis, the nuclear threat.⁴⁸

⁴⁸David Tracy provides an excellent discussion of this concern in his "Practical Theology in the Situation of Global Pluralism," 139-54.

Practical theology and other scientific disciplines. The final issue that I will summarize is the relationship between practical theology and other contemporary scientific disciplines. In the description of the correlation process given above, one might get the sense that the correlation is simply between present practice and the classic theoretical formulations of one's particular faith, in this case Christianity. However, a review of the definition of Tracy's revised correlational model will remind us that the attempt is to correlate questions and answers not only from concrete situations and from Christian revelation, but also from various secular and non-Christian interpretations of existence.

This, then, brings us to the question of how this correlation will be accomplished, including the concerns of how much of an influence these other interpretations ought to have on our theoretical developments, and what to do when these interpretations seems to conflict with Christian interpretations. In terms of this dissertational study, I am especially concerned with the correlation between Christian interpretations and the interpretations coming from scientific disciplines, as this is a primary source of guidance for contemporary pastoral counselors.

In Chapter 1, I reviewed the criticism that pastoral counseling was losing its identity as a Christian ministry in that it was becoming overly dependent upon the scientific disciplines of psychology and psychotherapy. Others, however, claim that it is good to learn from all aspects of knowledge;

that indeed the Christian community has done this throughout its existence. How closely can a practical theologian relate to and take insights from a particular scientific discipline? Howard Grimes, in his article "What is Practical Theology?" points out with reasoned logic that there are basically three positions that one can take on this question.

At one extreme stand those who give a normative role to the social/behavior sciences....At the other extreme are those who use the insights of the social sciences with caution and always from a theological perspectiveA middle ground position is held by those who wish to place theology and the social/behavior sciences in correlation.⁶⁹

Having concurred with Tracy's revised correlational model for practical theology, I (as do most contemporary practical theologians) obviously attempt to develop an effective correlation. Indeed it can be persuasively argued, as in this quote by J. A. Whyte, that the avoidance of an influential relationship between one's theological understandings and the insights of one contemporary scientific disciplines is fairly impossible.

...it is important to recognize that the practices, the institutions, the structures in which faith is embodied at any given time are shaped not only by the inner logic of the faith itself but also by the secular culture and the social institutions in which they are set....It is not a matter of regret that this should be so; it may be regarded as one aspect of the Church's mission that it is thus set within the world.⁷⁰

Indeed, sometimes the factual knowledge gained in these other disciplines can help to correct (through healthy suspicion) long-held distortions within the doctrines of the faith

⁶⁹Grimes, 33.

⁷⁰Whyte, 236.

community. Browning observed that:

Some of the social sciences - especially personality theory, developmental psychology, and sociobiology - contain empirical information about the central tendencies and central needs of human beings. This kind of information, as I have argued elsewhere, may make important contributions to our normative judgments...⁷¹

Thus, the problem is not in that these relations exist; they are helpful, natural, and even needed. The core of the problem is that it is often hard to keep such relationships and correlations in balance. As has already been shown in the discussion on correlation above, the human tendency always seems to drift into, and give more power to, some particular perspective; be it existential philosophy, Marxist sociopolitical theory, or psychological systems. Whyte added to his above analysis by stating: "But too often this openness has been a simple dependence, an uncritical borrowing from the secular, the appropriateness of the secular model for theological material being unquestioned."⁷²

Edward Farley illustrated this tendency in a discussion on theological education, in which he was arguing that the tendency has been towards developing separate departmental disciplines, with each of these disciplines legitimizing their existence by finding and relating to a secular science that dealt with similar issues.

The law is that any cognitive undertaking that can become independent of the science that gave it birth

⁷¹Browning, ed., 15.

⁷²Whyte, 230.

will do so. We have in this law the story of modern theological education. The life of so-called academic disciplines is not unlike human maturation. In an initial stage the subject matter lives, perhaps restlessly, in dependence on the parent science. An adolescent stage occurs in which it is anxious to be on its own. Finally, in adulthood, the subject moves out to live as an independent discipline. It may occasionally borrow something from its family, but will do so only when it is sure of its independence. Therefore, it looks for a live-in mate, an auxiliary discipline such as rhetoric, psychology, phenomenology, linguistics, and so on. It may eventually become so dependent on this auxiliary discipline that a marriage occurs (as between pastoral counseling and psychology). On the other hand, the relation may be merely an affair (as theology is now having with deconstruction). The entelechy is clear in direction, namely, that of independence from the original matrix. Once the independence is achieved, the young adult procures all sorts of support to maintain its independence -- annual conferences, a professional society, distinctive nomenclature, a refereed journal, sponsored research, and an independent structure in the school.⁷⁹

In this way, there is a natural tendency in all persons to become attracted to a particular perspective or area of wisdom, such as Marxism, linguistics, feminism, or psychology. Once this attraction occurs, they then begin to interpret all of life from this perspective, including one's understandings about the Christian faith.

On the one hand relationships between Christian theology and contemporary secular and non-Christian disciplines are unavoidable. Yet, on the other hand there exists this natural inclination to become overly dependent and even normatively affected to the underlying assumptions of these disciplines. What is the answer? I believe that the answer exists in our

⁷⁹Farley, 21-2.

growing understandings about practical theological method. As practical theology is the discipline by which we critically correlate the wisdom of the faith with the wisdom of current practices, the more we understand and use effective practical theological methodologies the more we will be able to live in that dynamic balance where we are in both faithful response to the changeless Tradition and effective dialogue with secular and non-Christian disciplines.

By following the methods of critical reflection and revised correlation, we will be called to faithfully and continually carry out the activities of retrieval, suspicion, testing the leeways, asking prime ethical questions, and relating particular programs and middle axioms to the general, never-changing principles of the faith. If these activities are faithfully carried out, then the wisdom possessed in the questions and answers of auxiliary scientific disciplines (as well as other secular and non-Christian perspectives) can be both faithfully and effectively brought into a rich relationship with one's understanding of Christian perspectives and wisdom -- a relationship which enriches a person's understanding and response to human nature and culture, and also enriches one's understanding and response to the doctrines and practices of the community of faith -- without these relationships becoming unfaithful, one-sided affairs.

In this chapter, the rich methodological resources provided by the resurgent and growing field of practical theology have

been explored. This exploration of contemporary practical theological resources leads directly to the hope and direction of this dissertation, which is to apply these rich methodological tools to the theoretical and practical concerns of contemporary pastoral counseling. These resources seem especially suited in aiding pastoral counselors to more fully understand and develop the theological dimensions of their counseling activities.

In the project developed for this dissertational study, I developed a practical theological methodology and then applied this method to a specific theological issue involved in contemporary pastoral counseling. The results of this project is presented and discussed in Chapter 4. However, in order to first place this project into a fuller historical and theological context, the focus of Chapter 3 is on reviewing recent attempts to relate Christian pastoral counseling to its theological base. Entitled "Pastoral Counseling and Christian Theology: A Historical Statement," this chapter: (1) provides a historical summary of the on-going relationship between pastoral counseling and Christian theology during the twentieth century, (2) reviews some of the current theological themes influencing the pastoral counseling field, and (3) based upon this historical review, highlights some of the unique contributions that the discipline of practical theology can bring to the theological task of pastoral counseling.

CHAPTER 3

Pastoral Counseling and Christian Theology:

A Historical Statement

Having mined rich insights from contemporary psychotherapy, many pastoral counselors are also hungering for a deeper theological guidance. In 1986, Wayne Oates wrote in the Preface to his book The Presence of God in Pastoral Counseling:

Pastoral Counseling has its roots in both worship and science. Too often, the scientific exploration of interpersonal relations has been the most apparent. Recently, however, the worship dimension of pastoral counseling has become more evident.¹

And Howard Clinebell has affirmed:

The heart of our uniqueness is our theological and pastoral heritage, orientation, resources, and awareness. This is our frame of reference and the area of our special expertise. The awareness of the transpersonal Spirit of God that is the core of all reality, should influence profoundly everything we do including our counseling....This consciousness should help pastors recognize the spiritual dimension present in every counseling situation.²

Science/Worship, Theory/Theology, Secular Psychotherapy/Christian Ministry, spiritual dimension/counseling situation -- whatever words they use, pastoral counselors continuously refer to this central, on-going dialogue between current scientific learnings

¹Wayne E. Oates, The Presence of God in Pastoral Counseling (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1986), 9.

²Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling Rev. ed., 167.

and the theological understandings of our faith; and they long for a richer reliance upon the wisdom of Christian theology.

As noted in the last chapter, the central thesis to this dissertational study is that current resources and developments in practical theology can provide pastoral counselors with valuable methodologies for guiding this complex dialogue between science and worship, and for bringing them into fuller relationship with Christian theological insights. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical and theological context to this thesis. Towards this end, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is "Historical Relationship Between Pastoral Counseling and Christian Theology." The second section is "Contemporary Theological Themes in Pastoral Counseling." The final section is "Contributions Practical Theology Can Make to Pastoral Counseling."

Historical Relationship Between Pastoral Counseling and Christian Theology

Numerous scholarly efforts have detailed the historical relationship between pastoral counseling (and its parent field of pastoral care) and Christian theology, either as part of a book about the history of pastoral care or as a historical chapter in a book on pastoral theology. Most notable of these works are John T. McNeill's History of the Cure of Souls (1934), Seward Hiltner's Preface to Pastoral Theology (1958), William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle's Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (1964), and Don S. Browning's The Moral Context of Pastoral Care

(1976). Along with this list of highly respected historical statements, I would like to add a more recent book, E. Brooks Hollifield's A History of Pastoral Care in America, (1983) (refer to the bibliography of this dissertation). Hollifield's book gives a detailed account of Protestant pastoral care in America from the 1600s until the 1960s.

Since beginning as a religious community two thousand years ago, Christians have been motivated to care for each other. The Christian belief in a creative God who has acted to bring salvation to the created, not only has motivated the believers to bring others to this promised future salvation, but has also continually motivated them to care for the needs of people in the present moment. This earthly care, when institutionalized within the life of the church, has been referred to as the activity of pastoral care. Throughout the life of the church, there has been attempts to link this earthly, pastoral care to the theology of the community.

Seward Hiltner in his Preface to Pastoral Theology, tied this pastoral care activity, which he described with the traditional Christian symbol of shepherding, directly to our theological faith in a creative, loving God.

The unique place occupied by shepherding in Christianity comes from the way in which our relationship to God and our relationship to our fellow men are regarded as inseparable. The Great Commandment of Jesus, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind....You shall love your neighbor as yourself," shows this relationship and of course emerges from our Jewish religious heritage. It became clear to Paul and others that this commandment followed upon the fact

that God had first loved us.³

With this direct tie between our response to God, and our pastoral care activities, Hiltner went on to create a typology which identified three general aspects to shepherding: "healing, sustaining, and guiding."⁴ In their landmark work, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, Clebsch and Jaekle used this typology (with the addition of reconciliation) in order to characterize the different theological emphasis of pastoral care throughout Christian history. They defined these four functions in the following way:

Healing is that function in which a representative Christian person helps a debilitated person to be restored to a condition of wholeness, on the assumption that this restoration achieves also a new level of spiritual insight and welfare.

Sustaining consists of helping a hurting person to endure and to transcend a circumstance in which restoration to his former condition is remote or impossible.

Guiding consists of assisting perplexed persons make confident choices when such choices are viewed as affecting the present or future state of the soul. Educative guidance tends to draw out of the individual's own experiences and values the criteria and resources for such decisions. Inductive guidance tends to lead the individual to adopt an a priori set of values and criteria by which to make his decisions.

Reconciling functions to reestablish broken relationships between man and fellow man and between man and God.⁵

With this typology, Clebsch and Jaekle then reviewed the movement of Christian history, and analyzed each era for its dominant pastoral care theme. Don Browning summarized this

³Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (Nashville: Abingdon, 1958), 17.

⁴Hiltner, 28.

⁵Clebsch & Jaekle, 8-9.

analysis in the following quote:

Clebsch and Jaekle assure us that in each period of Christian history which they discuss, all of the four functions of pastoral care were present. However, in each period, one function tended to be dominant because of the historical needs of the church in that period of time. During the period of primitive Christianity, which lasted until around A.D. 186, pastoral care was characterized by an emphasis on sustaining souls through the vicissitudes of life in this world which Christians believed to be running swiftly toward its end. For the next hundred years, the pace of persecution of Christians by civil authorities accelerated. Many of these Christians, under the pressure of persecution, fell away or "lapsed" from the life of the church. During this period, the reconciliation of lapsed souls back into the life of the church became the central focus of the cure of souls. An important shift in the nature of pastoral care occurred after the establishment of Christianity as the official religion by the Emperor Constantine. Pastoral care then became a tool for assimilating various groups, especially the Teutonic people of the north, into the ethos of the empire and the church. During this period, pastoral care took on an increasingly inductive character. Clebsch and Jaekle believe that healing became important for the cure of souls during medieval times, reconciliation during the Renaissance and Reformation, sustaining during the Enlightenment, and finally an increasingly more educative style of care during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.⁴

According to this typology, we are presently living in a period of time when the dominate shepherding style is educative guiding. The emphasis of this current educative guiding is upon aiding perplexed persons to make confident choices by drawing this guidance out of the individual's own experiences and values. This is a excellent definition of the goal of pastoral counseling. From this perspective, then, one can view the current development of pastoral counseling as a marriage of

⁴Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care, 58-59.

modern psychotherapeutic learnings and the current pastoral care emphasis upon educative guidance.

Thus, when one talks about pastoral counseling as theology, the starting point is the affirmation that Christian pastoral counseling activity is part of the Christian community's attempts to care for human souls, a caring that is rooted directly in the theological belief that because God loves us, we are called to love one another. The contemporary emphases upon counseling is simply the present expression (specific tradition) that the Church is using to express this love.

But like all specific Christian traditions, contemporary pastoral counseling needs to not only be an effective expression, meeting a present societal need; it also has an obligation to remain faithful to the central, and changeless, Christian Tradition. Because of this, it is essential to ask what specific theological statements our contemporary pastoral counseling activities are communicating. Holifield, in his A History of Pastoral Care in America, is very helpful in providing some answers for those of us who are practicing as contemporary American pastoral counselors.

In his analysis, Holifield divides the twentieth century into four distinct theological periods, in which different theological understandings about pastoral care and the nature of human life have dominated. He has labeled these four periods as the theology of adjustment, the theology of insight, the theology of acceptance and self-realization, and the theology of context.

The Theology of Adjustment

The twentieth century began with high optimism. It was a time of confidence about human nature, and a strong belief in the power of education. The time was also the high mark of liberal theology, which had a theology of human nature that could be summarized in this way: Human sin was the result of a lack of proper education and maladjustment. If human beings could be educated to proper behavior (adjustment), then sin would disappear; and these highly educated human beings would work together, under God's guidance, to build the promised Kingdom of God here on earth.

One of the most influential persons guiding intellectual thought during this period was John Dewey. Dewey's belief in the power of education in bringing about a better adjusted humanity not only helped to create the liberal theology of adjustment, it also helped to create the societal atmosphere that has made educative guidance the pastoral care function of the 1900s in the United States. Hollifield wrote the following concerning the influence of Dewey's thought upon the discipline of pastoral care and counseling:

The man who did most to define the meaning of adjustment for the pastoral care writers of the early 1930's was John Dewey. His Democracy and Education (1916) might even be described as a hidden classic of the pastoral care movement. Filtered through the religious education traditions and assimilated into psychotherapeutic practice, the book's ideas would continue to echo among pastoral theologians well into the 1960s. Dewey defined education as a "reconstruction or reorganization of experience" which enhanced the meaning of that experience and increased the ability to direct the course of subsequent

experience. Education therefore was a continual adjustment to an environment, but not in the sense of conformity to external conditions. "It is essential," Dewey wrote, "that adjustments be understood in its active sense of control of means for achieving ends." Adjustment required problem-solving.⁷

Liberal American theologians from 1900 through the 1930s advocated a theology of adjustment based upon Dewey's thought. Typical of these theologians was Douglas Clyde Macintosh of Yale Divinity School, who in 1919 wrote Theology as an Empirical Science; in which he argued that God, as the highest reality, was consistent and constant, and ideal human life would be a proper adjustment to this higher reality. The empirical scientific study of theologians would be to define God in various ways, adjust their lives to this divine definition, and then observe the results. If the results of such living brought about consistent positive experiences, then the related definition of God would be empirically proven as correct and human life would have found its proper adjustment.⁸ In this way, the theological task of the period was to blend education and Christian beliefs to discover the most ideal understanding of God, and the properly adjusted human lifestyle.

This metaphor of theology as adjustment guided the pastoral theologians of the period as well:

When Charles Holman of the University of Chicago wrote The Cure of Souls: A Socio-Psychological Approach (1932) he described "soul-sickness" as inadequate religious or moral adjustment. The task of the

⁷E. Brooks Holifield, A History of Pastoral Care in America (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 223.

⁸Ibid, 228.

religious counselor was to facilitate adjustment by promoting devotion to noble causes and values, providing assurance of cosmic support in the struggle, and bringing people into the rich social environment of the Christian community. When Karl Stolz of the Hartford School of Religious Education published his Pastoral Psychology (1932), he explained that human life was a sequence of adjustments and it was the pastor's responsibility to create in maladjusted persons the will and ability to reorganize themselves. Holman and Stolz appealed frequently to the psychoanalysts, especially to Carl Jung and Alfred Adler, but their main debt was to the older psychologists of religion, the religious educators, and the liberal theologians. It was from these sources that they learned about adjustment to reality.⁹

Following this format, the function of the pastor as counselor was to teach maladjusted persons a more appropriate and successful lifestyle, one based upon Christian values. As more and more persons became properly adjusted, society as a whole would move nearer to the image of God's Kingdom.

Theology as Insight

The theology of adjustment and its liberal theological foundations were challenged in the 1930s and 1940s on at least two different fronts. One challenge came from clinical pastoral work, especially the work of Richard Cabot's Boston clinical group and Anton Boisen's New York clinical group. In 1936, Cabot and Russel Dicks wrote The Art of Ministering to the Sick and Boisen wrote Exploration of the Inner World. Both books are classics in the field of clinical pastoral education. Though in some disagreement and competition with one another, both groups found the theology of adjustment lacking in its understanding of

⁹Ibid, 229-230.

human nature. By directly working with deeply troubled "living human documents," and opening their eyes fully to a full view of "human disorders," they became directly aware of the ineffective and morally judgmental qualities of the theology of adjustment. Human beings were much more complex and emotionally-laden than acknowledged in liberal thought. Deep hurts and emotional pains could not be educated away. Representative of this point of view was a statement made by the chaplain supervisors of the Council for Clinical Training during the 1940s, and summarized by Hollifield:

Protestant legalism and moralism were responsible for much of the emotional conflict and spiritual immaturity of the patients and students. Hence they called for an end to harsh moral judgments, negative views of sexuality, legalistic preaching, and above all, authoritarianism, which they deemed "essentially sinful."... 'understanding' had taken on a fresh nuance of meaning. It connoted tolerance, an acceptance of feelings; of the body, the senses, and sexuality; and an opposition to rigidity and to condemnation. Understanding implied an ethical attitude, a willingness to sympathize with people rather than idolize conventions and rules.... Largely for theological reasons, adjustment by then seemed no longer an adequate metaphor to describe pastoral work. In any case, the clinical traditions had not found it useful in their work with students. The emerging consensus sought another guiding metaphor, and the gradual trend was toward "insight."¹⁰

The other major challenge to a theology of adjustment came from the decline of liberal theology in the 1930s and 1940s. The Great Depression and World War II severely damaged the liberal notion of creating the Kingdom of God through education. Rather than using the expanded knowledge of the twentieth century to

¹⁰Ibid, 248-249.

create a new and more Christian society, it could be argued that increased education had simply taught people how to build bigger and better instruments of war and repression. Theologians began to reflect this change of perspective. For these theologians:

human beings did not seem to be makers and builders, shaping and adapting themselves to fit into God's purposes or making adjustments here and there that would bring in the kingdom. In the new vision prompted by political unrest and economic depression, human beings seemed limited, finite, anxious creatures, burdened with the responsibility of free decision and with the knowledge that no finite good could be identified with the Infinite.¹¹

This theological perspective was best represented by Tillich, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Reinhold Niebuhr, and often referred to as Christian Realism. Like the pastoral clinicians, they were clearly aware of the complexities and insecurities existing in human nature -- a nature that would always be finite and imperfect. Since perfect adjustments could not overcome this finite nature, the best human beings could hope for was to develop clearer insight and understanding into psychological and theological dynamics. Reinhold Niebuhr attempted to provide such fuller insight into human nature with his two volume work, The Nature and Destiny of Man (1941 and 1943). Basic to this human nature was the anxiety caused by confronting one's finitude, and the sin of attempting to overcome it.

Pastoral care began to reflect this change in theological perspective, and the clearest representative of the new approach was Rollo May. May wrote The Art of Counseling (1939) and The

¹¹Holifield, 250.

Springs of Creative Living (1940), dedicating the latter book to Paul Tillich with gratitude to Reinhold Niebuhr. In these two books he proclaimed a theology of insight for pastoral care and counseling.

May believed in 1939 that men and women were "finite, imperfect, and limited," that their insecurity drove them to prideful self-will, and that they could overcome egocentricity only when the Christ - a concrete figure "outside" the closed circle of their own subjectivity - reconciled them to "the structure of reality." He was wary of the older optimism about "growth," with its assumption that more enlightenment, education, and ethics could transform the personality. He believed that human life was marked by an unending conflict between freedom and determination: The self yearned for a total freedom that would transcend all structures, but egocentric freedom swamped the self in its own subjectivity and prompted a retreat into the security of unquestioned allegiance to a finite structure - whether it be a nation-state, an authoritarian moralism, or a fundamentalist religion. Following the lead of the psychoanalyst Fritz Kunkel, he argued therefore that the task of the counselor was to help people maintain a healthy tension between their freedom and the demands of reality, including the demands imposed by the "structure" of things.¹²

The dramatic changes in world events and theology had brought about similar changes in pastoral counseling, with much more emphasis upon listening skills, reflective understanding, and aiding persons in gaining clearer insight into the competing and complex realities of their psychological internal world.

Theology of Acceptance and Self-Realization

After World War II drifted into the 1950s, and Americans began to experience the benefits of their enhanced world position, a renewed optimism returned to American Christian

¹²Ibid, 251-252. Emphasis added.

theology. This time, however, rather than developments in pastoral care reflecting changing trends in broader philosophical and theological issues, the changes originated within the field of pastoral care itself. The principal person promoting this change was Carl Rogers. Rogers was an enthusiastic promoter of both self-acceptance and self-growth. His classic work Client-Centered Therapy (1951), set forth his theory of personality, in which he declared that human beings were marked with an inherent tendency toward self-actualization. Given a positive, accepting atmosphere (an atmosphere of empathy and unconditional positive regard), the individual could and would move towards actualizing themselves.

These themes of acceptance and self-realization, as developed by Rogers and embraced by a generation, were optimistic about human nature; but it was a different optimism than in the liberal human adjustment period earlier in the century. Whereas the theologians of adjustment were very positive about social institutions, and felt that through education and proper adjustment to socially-accepted (Christian) criteria of behavior people would be able to build more perfect social institutions and structures (the earthly Kingdom of God); the theology of Rogers was optimistic about the individual's own ability to move towards growth and enhancement, and saw social institutions as usually inhibitors to that growth. As Holifield noted:

The earlier proponents of self-realization has supposed that social institutions, however much in need of periodic reform, both promoted and guided the growth of individuals. They had located the possibilities of

self-realization within trustworthy social structures. But the psychologists and social critics who informed postwar pastoral theology - Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Carl Rogers, and others - tended to view most social institutions as bureaucratic impositions on human freedom and dignity.¹³

Thus, in this theological perspective, human beings were seen as intrinsically good, and the main goal of pastoral care was to remove institutional blocks and create the freedom for this intrinsic goodness to actualize itself through human growth, and the realization of human potential. Many pastors during this period concurred with this positive theology of individual human nature, and focused upon working with individuals in counseling settings in order to aid them in unlocking their inherent potential. Their counseling style was a non-directive non-judgmental style, which avoided either teaching or directing clients, but strove to the client's own inner healing, wisdom, and potential blossom in an atmosphere of empathy and unconditional positive regard.

Four pastoral theologians gave leadership to this growing interest in America in interpreting Rogarian psychological thought into a theology of pastoral care which focused upon the activity of counseling. They were Seward Hiltner, University of Chicago, who wrote Pastoral Counseling (1949) and Preface to Pastoral Theology (1958); Carroll A. Wise, Methodist Garrett Biblical Institute, Pastoral Counseling: Its Theory and Practice (1951); Wayne Oates, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, The

¹³Holifield, 260. Emphasis added.

Christian Pastor, (1951); and Paul Johnson, Boston University, Psychology of Pastoral Care (1953).

While these four theologians had their different emphases, they also all wrote from a common theological view of human nature, for "if any topic recurred consistently, as either an explicit issue or an implicit criterion, it was the theme of self-realization."¹⁴ Like Rogers, their theological understanding of human nature was basically positive and growth-oriented, with the goal of pastoral care being to provide the individual with the freedom to realize their self-directed potential. As noted, this theology of self-realization provided a negative assessment of the earlier theologies of judgment and adjustment. Those theologies which emphasized external moral laws, behavioral expectations for the faithful, and judgment upon the sinful, were critiqued by these pastoral theologians as overly rigid and unloving; and were to be modified -- at least in the counseling ministry -- with a response of understanding, acceptance, and an encouragement for self-actualizing. The call for non-judgmental acceptance is seen in the following three quotes from Hiltner, Wise, and Johnson.

It is tempting to speculate on why we pastors have such a predilection for moral judgment even when its exercise clearly defeats our larger purposes....In counseling, moral judgments in place of understanding and clarification are especially likely to be disastrous.¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid, 275-276.

¹⁵Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon, 1949), 49-50. Emphasis added.

As counselors, our chief goal is not to change a person's values, but to value persons.¹⁶

To the extent that we object to another person's behavior and want to change him, we are rejecting him as unworthy.¹⁷

These pastoral theologians also differed sharply from the theology of insight of the 1930s and the 1940s, with its emphasis upon a view of human nature as highly complex, insecure, and containing a built-in tendency towards self-destruction and sin. The difference was crystallized in a debate between Reinhold Niebuhr and Carl Rogers.

When Reinhold Niebuhr criticized the psychotherapists for excessive optimism about growth and self-realization, and for insufficient awareness of the impulse toward selfishness which existed "at the very heights of human personality," Rogers could only shake his head in wonderment. Niebuhr, he said, was offensive, pretentious, and dogmatic. Rogers insisted that the freely functioning human being was constructive and trustworthy. People were not the victims of self-love. They were rational and realistic, and only confidence in the human capacity for self-actualization could safeguard the possibility of acceptance and self-acceptance.

In the debate between Rogers and Niebuhr, the pastoral theologians stood with Rogers.¹⁸

This was a critical shift in the theological understanding of human nature. Ever since ancient Hebrews first shared the story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, the Judeo-Christian tradition has held a core belief in the basic sinfulness of human beings, acknowledging the human impulse toward selfishness. In

¹⁶Carroll A. Wise, "Pastoral Counseling and Human Values," Pastoral Counselor 6, no. 2 (1968): 3. Emphasis added.

¹⁷Paul Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), 181. Emphasis added.

¹⁸Hollifield, 300. Emphasis added.

accepting the client-centered, unconditional positive regard theory of counseling, these pastoral theologians also found themselves giving some credence to Rogers' theology of human nature, a theology which tended to minimize the core Christian doctrine on the sinfulness of human nature, and stress instead a belief in the individual goodness of all people.

Thus, the predominate theology that influenced the pivotal birth years of the contemporary pastoral counseling movement was an upbeat, individualistic theology. It viewed God as creative, supportive, loving, and above all, accepting. It affirmed humans as intrinsically good, growth-oriented; and given the freedom, self-actualizing. And it was suspicious of institutions and social structures, whose rigidity was often seen as the cause of evil and human suffering -- and this included the institution of the Church (which may help to explain why many ministers specializing in pastoral counseling in the 1950s and 1960s tended to function outside the church).

In complete fairness to the four pastoral theologians summarized in this section -- Hiltner, Wise, Oates, and Johnson -- they were not as one-sided in the debate over human nature as was Rogers. In Pastoral Counseling, Hiltner devoted seven pages to an analysis of human nature and indicated his belief that "there are devils as well as angels inside."¹² Indeed, it was primarily a growing uncomfortableness with Rogers' highly optimistic view of human nature that brought the shapers of the

¹²Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, 32.

pastoral counseling movement to the next theological period.

Increasingly, theologians raised further questions about self-realization and growth. By the 1960s even Paul Johnson, one of the most enthusiastic of the early proponents of Rogarian methods, was asserting that Rogers had wrongly espoused "a capsule theory of personality" as something self-sufficient and self-contained. But Rogers had advanced such a view partly because he had found that social institutions and traditions no longer seemed to nourish people. Did an alternative view of "growth" require a new look at institutional structure? Some of the pastoral theologians thought so, and by the mid-1950s they were turning with renewed interest to the notion of a "context" for pastoral care.²⁰

Theology of Context

The same pastoral theologians who had introduced and popularized the counseling approaches of Rogers into the healing ministries of the Church, were finding it difficult to harmonize their theological beliefs with the presuppositions of the Rogarian method. Hiltner, who would "later look back in fear, feeling that he had contributed unintentionally to the one-sided preoccupation with self-realization and self-development in the culture."²¹ Paul Johnson concluded that Rogarian self-actualization produced a "sterile and introvert narcissism of I for Me by Myself."²²

Central to this growing concern were the realizations that an individualistic emphasis tended to encourage self-interest over relationship-building, and that the nonjudgmental acceptance of unconditional positive regard, without confrontation could

²⁰Holifield, 306. Emphasis added.

²¹Ibid, 311.

²²Ibid, 320.

become cheap grace. Holifield summarized the growing critique:

The movement away from Rogers was more visible in the attention given to themes of "judgment" and "confrontation" in counseling. Without at all abandoning the ideal of "acceptance," some pastoral writers began to talk about the importance of "confronting" people with the need to face and change their destructive patterns of living. And even those who felt uneasy with the idea of confrontation began to put greater emphasis on ethical "judgment." Seward Hiltner suggested in 1965 that his own position had "mellowed." He was by then more convinced than ever of the importance of moving toward judgments in counseling - not arbitrary judgments imposed from without, which would merely reactivate psychological mechanisms of defense, but "shared appraisals" which respected the other person's capacity to assimilate a gentle nudge. "Acceptance," wrote Carroll Wise in 1966, "involves and includes judgment," and its goal should be to encourage "self-judgment and evaluation." An acceptance that overlooked a person's ethical confusion, insisted the Baptist Samuel Southard, did not constitute "loving care"....By 1965, Howard Clinebell, a pastoral theologian at the Claremont School of Theology in California, announced that The client-centered approach" had "dominated pastoral counseling literature too long." Clinebell disavowed any intention to return to "pre-Rogarian abuses," but he had decided that a "relationship-centered counseling," aimed explicitly at enhancing a person's ability to form satisfying relationships with other people, should supersede the Rogarian reflection of feeling.²⁹

This dissatisfaction with one-sided Rogarian perspectives had the pastoral theologians looking for more solid theological grounding, one which would move away from individualization and towards a more contextual approach. In a lengthy analysis, Holifield concluded that the search moved in three directions: (1) towards an emphasis upon the context of interpersonal relationships (fueled by the interpersonal counseling of Harry Stack Sullivan and others, and the group dynamics counseling of

²⁹Ibid, 321, 320.

Kurt Lewin -- which brought about a shift from the internal world of the psyche to the world of interactions and relationships -- a welcomed shift to pastoral theologians as the Christian religion has always been more of a communal, covenantal nature than the individualistic focus of self-realization); (2) towards a recognition of the church as the context in which pastoral counseling is done (and a debate concerning if pastoral counseling done in a counseling center is still appropriately within the context of the church's ministry); and (3) towards providing a fuller theological context for understanding and guiding the ministry of pastoral counseling.²⁴

I will elaborate further on this third direction of developing fuller theological contexts for pastoral counseling in the next section on Contemporary Theological Themes; but first I want to summarize this historical analysis. Holifield has shown how theological understandings of pastoral care in twentieth-century America has been focused upon a ever-changing theology of human nature -- a theology that has gone from an emphasis upon adjustment to insight to self-realization to relational context. Interestingly, as pointed out by Howard Clinebell in his revision of Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling (1984), a similar progression took place in the society at large. He quotes Daniel Yankelovich, who in his book New Rules: Searching for Self-

²⁴Holifield's analysis of these three directions in developing contextual groundings for pastoral counseling covers the last section of his book, A History of Pastoral Care in America, 313-348.

Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down concluded that twentieth-century Americans have shifted their central cultural values. As a society, we have moved away from the old work ethic, which valued responsibility and duty (the theology of adjustment). We have moved through, and in some cases are still moving through, an ethic of privatized self-actualization, which has glorified freedom, spontaneity, and doing one's own thing (the theology of self-realization). We are now entering into a new ethic of commitment, which values mutual responsibility in relationships (the theology of context).²⁵

This cultural study not only gives added credence to Hollifield's historical analysis, it also illustrates the close interrelationship between cultural issues and values, and the theological agenda of any given moment in history. As seen in the last chapter, this interrelationship between culture and theological expression is essential, so that the particular, concrete theological traditions can speak effectively to the important contemporary issues of a given society. However, as seen in the tendency towards over-individualization of pastoral care during the Rogers' era, the other essential part of the theological task is to remain faithful to core concepts of Christianity -- such as community and covenant. Keeping both of these tasks in mind, some of the important theological themes in the contemporary field of pastoral counseling are summarized in the next section.

²⁵Clinebell, 44.

Contemporary Theological Themes
in Pastoral Counseling

As practitioners in pastoral counseling began to declare their work to be a specialized full-time ministry, and formalized this with the creation of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors in 1963, growing numbers of these full-time pastoral counselors began to feel an increased desire to be able to speak more clearly about the theological contexts of this special ministry. Thus, pastoral theologians worked to more fully define the relationship between theology and psychology, and to clearly express the theological significance and uniqueness of the counseling relationship. Holifield, concluding his historical study with the 1960s, discussed four of these contemporary attempts: Albert Outler's work, Paul Tillich's theology of correlation, process theology, and Hiltner's later work. To these I would want to add the current influences of liberation theologies, and the contextual work of Don Browning. I will give a very concise summary of each, as a backdrop to my focus upon pastoral counseling as a practical theology. I will refer to these contemporary theological themes as I present my practical theological model, and will return to them again during the final chapter.

Albert Outler

A professor of theology at Yale, Outler began to commute weekly to the Williamson Alanson White Foundation in the 1950s where he entered the world of psychology. In 1954 he published

the book Psychotherapy and the Christian Message, in which he attempted to relate these two fields of study. While he affirmed that clerical exposure to the theories of psychotherapy had vastly improved pastoral care, his basic premise was that there was a need for theology to check and limit the uncritical pretensions and naturalistic presuppositions of secular psychotherapy. "Christianity and psychotherapy are both wisdoms-about-life," he wrote, "and it is by no means clear that they are the same wisdom."²⁶

Outler believed that Christian theology brought particular wisdoms to the counseling process. Christianity held to a world-view in which we humans have a consciousness about our existence as natural beings who had the capacity to transcend nature and consider our relationship to the Creator, and therefore exercise some degree of "responsible freedom." This world-view also understood that the discrepancy between human possibility and human actuality created a human "refusal to accept our finitude" and a state of anxiety "deeper than any specific neurotic maladjustment." Furthermore, Christian theology knew of the paradoxical truth that successful self-realization includes self-denial, and that "self-denial, rightly understood, is the master key to the right ordering of life."²⁷

Outler believed that the above Christian world-view about human nature formed a context of theological affirmation which

²⁶Albert Outler, Psychotherapy and the Christian Message (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 8.

²⁷Ibid, 69, 92, 129, 132, 226, 228.

could guide the activities of pastoral counseling.

To speak of God as being "compresent" in every situation, including the counseling session, was the suggest a triadic relationship which both imposed restraints and created possibilities. It clarified the meaning of healing by compelling both the counselor and the person seeking counsel to recognize the intractability of human limitations; it thus undercut any facile optimism about counseling. It precluded manipulation and control by the counselor, who must recognize "the presence of God who judges as man must not judge, who redeems as man cannot redeem." And it required that the counselor consider ideas, especially ethical ideas, as more than simply "psychological material"...[This] would not only help ministers recognize that they, too, were "human, all too human," but would also encourage them to seriously consider the moral and spiritual attitudes of people who were caught within a web of "self-frustrations."²⁰

In this way, Outler's primary concern was that core theological understandings about the human condition -- one which is finite, anxious, and spiritual -- be brought into the counseling process, and not just psychologized away.

Paul Tillich

While Outler was commuting to the White Foundation, Tillich was meeting monthly with Seward Hiltner, Rollo May, and other theologians, sociologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists in what was called the New York Psychology Group. His first volume of Systematic Theology (1951) and The Courage to Be (1952) had made Tillich a theological celebrity in postwar America, and nowhere was he more popular or influential than with pastoral counselors and pastoral theologians. His method of correlation seemed especially adaptable to creating bridges between theology

²⁰Hollifield, 327-328.

and psychology, and he had special interest in the concept of acceptance. Hiltner evaluated Tillich's theological contributions to the pastoral counseling journal Pastoral Psychology as being "in many ways the greatest thing that happened to the journal."²⁹ Wayne Oates concluded that Tillich "has provided the pastoral psychologist with a theological method for translating the power of the gospel into the idiom of twentieth century thought, namely a psychological way of thinking."³⁰

As discussed in Chapter 2, Tillich's method of correlation is a procedure in which the questions arising out of human life are correlated with the answering response that comes from the divine reality beyond us (Tracy then turned this question/answer process into a full dialogue with his revised correlation model, which continues to be a central methodological approach in practical theology today). Tillich used this method of correlation to build bridges between the concepts of psychology being used by pastoral counselors, and traditional theological concepts. Holifield gives an excellent summary of how Tillich used this method with the key counseling concept of acceptance.

Tillich's treatment of acceptance nicely exemplified his theological method. In his sermons in The Shaking of the Foundations, he proclaimed that the Protestant doctrine of justification by grace through faith, translated in modern idiom, simply meant that the unacceptable were accepted.... "Present theology can

²⁹Hiltner, "Paul Tillich and Pastoral Psychology: An Editorial," Pastoral Psychology 16, no.159 (1965): 10.

³⁰Wayne Oates, "The Contribution of Paul Tillich to Pastoral Psychology," Pastoral Psychology 19, no.181 (1968): 13.

say again that the acceptance by God of him who is not able to accept himself is the center of the Christian message."

One aim of Tillich's method, then, was to translate the older Protestant language about justification into the psychological idiom of the mid-twentieth century. He acknowledged that clinical therapeutic practice provided both the language and the inspiration for his new understanding of grace. The psychoanalytic method had taught him what it meant to speak of accepting the unacceptable. The word grace has regained "a new meaning by the way in which the analyst deals with his patient. He accepts him"...

Tillich did not believe, though, that Christian acceptance was merely the mirror reflection of a psychiatric technique. His method of correlation had redefined acceptance by locating it within a wider theological vocabulary. He insisted that the acceptance offered by counselors represented and embodied a "power of acceptance" that transcended any finite relationship. "No one can accept himself who does not feel that he is accepted by the power of acceptance which is greater than he, greater than his friends and counselors and psychological helpers." Each instance of acceptance and self-acceptance was an expression of the "power of being," or what Tillich called being-itself, the unconditional Ground and Power that undergirded and suffused everything that exists.³¹

In this way, Tillich was able to use the method of correlation to work from the question of self-acceptance being raised in the therapeutic setting, and answer it with a theological affirmation about the accepting nature of God, giving the Christian community a meaningful response to the contemporary experience of feeling unacceptable. This also gave pastoral counselors a clear theological explanation of their therapeutic ministry. They were aiding persons who felt that it was unacceptable to experience God's acceptance. They were putting the Christian message of grace into practice.

³¹Holifield, 330-331.

Process Theology

From the philosophical work of Alfred North Whitehead, to the theologies of Charles Hartshorne, Daniel Day Williams, and John Cobb, process thought brought its theological perspectives to bear on the pastoral counseling movement. Using Whiteheadian concepts of process, in which the foundation of life is found in dynamic process rather than in static objects, the process theologians applied this concept to their interpretation of the idea of God. Static notions of God's being, such as perfection, immutability, transcendent, and all-powerful were seen as foreign, contradictive, and ineffective in communicating God's love for all creatures. The process theologians began to interpret God, as changing, in process, and very imminent. Hartshorne spoke of "God's all-inclusiveness as 'divine relativity,' meaning that God was internally related to every event, process, and person."³² Williams contended that process theology provided a method of discussing God's "creative and redemptive presence in history" and made analogies between theological and therapeutic language, specifically, "between divine forgiveness and therapeutic acceptance."³³

In this way, the process concept that the divine was imminently a part of every creative, healing, growing moment put God right into the very fabric of the counseling process. As Williams put it; "When a broken self finds healing and strength,

³²Ibid, 337.

³³Ibid, 338.

the healing process belongs neither to the self nor to another who acts as psychiatrist or pastor. It belongs to a power operative in their relationship."³⁴ This operative, healing power in process thought is the imminent creative power of the divine. This concept of God gave the pastoral counselor a theological framework for discussing the healing processes of therapy.

However, other pastoral theologians, especially Oates and Hiltner began to question this tendency to turn to existing philosophical, psychological, and even theological systems as the beginning point in seeking the theological significance of pastoral counseling. They began to call more clearly for a new enterprise -- one which would formulate a pastoral theology directly from the study of concrete pastoral activity. Hiltner gave the inspiration for this approach to Anton Boisen.

The person who has done more than any other in our century to prepare the soil for a new pastoral theology is Anton T. Boisen....In studying "living human documents," even those in deep disturbance, one was not, he held, merely studying psychology or psychiatry, but also theology. For it is out of just such experiences, he contended that great religious insights have emerged in prophets and mystics of the past. Boisen's radical thesis is gradually gaining the recognition it deserves. Behind the particular form of his thesis, we should note, is the assertion that the study of actual and concrete forms of human experience, especially where ultimate issues are at stake, is theological if we bring theological questions to it. It is not merely psychology or psychiatry incorporated by theologians. It is a point in theological method. Boisen has not himself been concerned to work out a systematic pastoral theology, but the basic clue to the

³⁴Daniel Day Williams, The Minister and the Care of Souls (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 92.

systematic construction of this author has come from Boisen.³⁵

So the call had gone out to develop a theology founded in pastoral care and counseling activity itself. Hiltner not only raised the call, but also gave an attempt at answering it.

Seward Hiltner

In 1958 Hiltner presented Preface to Pastoral Theology to the pastoral care community. It was his attempt to follow Boisen's path of developing theology out of concrete human experience, and from this perspective begin to develop a systematic pastoral theology. His method was to study pastoral activity, and from this study concluded that there were three distinct kinds, or "perspectives" of pastoral activity, which he named shepherding, communicating, and organizing. He contended that each of these activities could lead to the development a separate branch of theology. Shepherding was the pastoral care ministry, and this ministry was subdivided into the activities of "healing, sustaining, and guiding."³⁶ Hiltner concluded that it would be the task of pastoral theology to find within these shepherding activities a theological wisdom that could illumine all of the church's functions. This wisdom would not be found by developing practical applications of already developed theology, but rather by allowing the church's practice itself be a source for the development of new theological insights. Hiltner

³⁵Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology, 51. Emphasis added.

³⁶Ibid, 69.

concluded the methodological section of his book with the statement:

Pastoral theology...is an operational-focused branch of theology, which begins with theological questions and concludes with theological answers, in the interim examining all acts and operations of pastor and church to the degree that they involved the perspective of Christian shepherding.³⁷

If he had written this book thirty years later, Hiltner would have undoubtedly added that pastoral theology is an exercise in practical theology.

In reading Preface to Pastoral Theology, it seems clear that Hiltner hoped that his theoretically divisions of shepherding (with subdivisions of healing, sustaining, and guiding), communicating, and organizing would provide a new framework around which the theological enterprise would be organized. While his work has continued to be praised and quoted, Hiltner has felt, on the whole, that his contribution has been largely ignored. As Holifield summarized:

[Hiltner] later acknowledged that he felt "alienated" by the absence of attention to his efforts to promote a new vision of pastoral theology. It seemed to him that there was simply not much interest in theology or fundamental theory in the pastoral care movement.³⁸

Viewing the present state of the pastoral counseling movement, which has become a distinct, specialized, professional ministry; Hiltner would probably see little to cause him to feel any less alienated. Perhaps this and similar attempts to create some bridges between pastoral counseling and practical theology

³⁷Ibid, 24.

³⁸Holifield, 342.

will help to continue the spirit and efforts of Anton Boisen and Seward Hiltner.

Theologies of Liberation

In the 1960s a variety of voices began to make themselves heard in theological circles which had previously been primarily an exclusively white, middle-class European/American male conversation. Persons like Gustavo Gutierrez and Juan Luis Segundo raised their voices from South America to proclaim a theology based upon the liberation of the politically and socially oppressed. Mary Daly, Phyllis Chesler, and many other feminist theologians have raised their voices in America in order to clearly reveal and oppose the inherent patriarchal nature of our political and social structures, our family systems, and even our therapies and our theologies. James Cone has spoken to the need for racial equality in Black Theology and Liberation. Warren Farrell, Marc Fasteau, and others have spoken up to show that men are also captive to narrow sex roles, bound by left-brain, logic-centered, and power-oriented approaches to life. Fortunately, we are now hearing voices from all races, religions, sexes, and cultures calling for equal regard and equal treatment. Any contemporary theological formulation must take the wisdom of these voices into account. As Howard Clinebell has stated:

The weakness of much pastoral care has been its hyperindividualism. Privatized pastoral care and counseling (along with privatized religion in general) ignore the pervasive ways in which racism, sexism, ageism, classism, speciesism, nationalism, militarism,

economic exploitation, and political oppression cripple human wholeness on a massive scale in all societies. To correct this myopia, the pastoral care of groups and institutions must be seen as the other side of personal and relational healing and growth work. Pastoral care and counseling should include consciousness raising to make people more aware of the societal roots of their individual pain, brokenness, and truncated growth. Caring and counseling should aim at freeing, motivating, and empowering people to work with others to make our institutions places where wholeness will be better nurtured in everyone. There can be no full or long-term wholeness for individuals and families in a broken world, a world that destroys wholeness by its systems of injustice, poverty, violence and exploitation.³⁹

Liberation, justice, and social responsibility are just as central to core Christian themes as are grace, acceptance, and self-realization -- and just as central to the healing task of pastoral counseling. These theologies of liberation and feminist perspectives are among the theological models explored further in Chapter 4 (see pages 180-185).

Don Browning

In Holifield's analysis of the predominate theologies which affect pastoral care in America, the present period was seen as being shaped by the theology of context. Few have done as much as Don Browning in bringing this theology of context to the pastoral counseling movement. In 1976, Browning wrote The Moral Context of Pastoral Care, and gave this introduction to the book:

It is my thesis that there is a moral context to all acts of care. This is true even of those acts which take the form of professional counseling and

³⁹Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling Rev. ed., 33. Emphasis added.

psychotherapy. It is important for the minister because it is his primary task to provide this moral context as a background to his pastoral care and counseling. This is true even though at times he may temporarily relax the demands of this moral context in the specific situation of caring for another person. It is good also for the secular psychotherapist to recognize the validity of this assertion. Secular counselors or psychotherapists generally try not to become moralistic or advocate their own ethical standards in the process of working with clients. Yet it is becoming increasingly acknowledged that secular therapists assume a moral context - a more or less mutually recognizable and shared moral world that extends beyond the therapeutic situation and provides a moral horizon to the therapy even though it may not be directly invoked by therapists in the process of counseling.⁴⁰

Thus, in Browning's assertion, there is an understanding that while pastors and pastoral counseling specialists will at times "bracket" moral issues from a counseling moment in order to work with the clients' personality dynamics, this ought to be done in a clear context of the therapist's over-all moral commitments; for whenever

the counselor can assume - because of his institutional context - that the client is reasonably clear about what the counselor's value commitments are, then the counselor can with good conscience set them aside and concentrate on emotional-dynamic issues without the fear that in the process he will be unwittingly confirming a value structure that the counselor does not believe in. On the other hand - and this is even more important - when the client is reasonably certain about the outlines of the counselor's value system, the client in good faith bracket value issues. He can look at emotional-dynamic issues without fearing that in the process of gaining insight into his emotional conflicts, he is unwittingly being inducted into a set of values that he does not know, does not consciously affirm, and cannot subscribe to.⁴¹

⁴⁰Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care, 11. Emphasis added.

⁴¹Ibid, 112.

Here, in focusing upon the always present, though sometimes bracketed, wider context of underlying beliefs and value systems, Browning is urging pastoral counselors to move into the direction that this dissertational study is advocating; which is the development and use of a clearly understood, consistent, and acknowledged value system concerning the counselor's view of the world and of human nature.

In Moral Context of Pastoral Counseling, Browning stated that "pastoral counseling must be founded on a context of moral meanings that is, in fact, the province of practical theology." Yet, he went on to complain at that time (1976) that "practical theology is in this sense of the word is the most neglected of any of the specialties of theology."⁴²

Since that writing, as seen in the discussion in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, practical theology has become an ever-increasing focus of interest and theological discussion in theological seminaries. However, it is still a very neglected resource in the field of pastoral counseling. Thus, this dissertation is dedicated to doing its part to bring some reality to Browning's stated desire in 1976 that pastoral counseling become more founded on a context of moral meanings, and do so through the use of the discipline of practical theology -- a discipline rooted in learning directly from living human documents and living human situations in the tradition of Anton Boisen and Sewerd Hiltner.

⁴²Ibid, 109.

Contributions Practical Theology Can Make
to Pastoral Counseling

The above summary of pastoral theologies gives the historical and theological contexts in which the present attempt to make connections between pastoral counseling and practical theology exist. It will hopefully be experienced as a further development of the work of Boisen, Hiltner, and Browning; and in the same spirit as all those theologians who have wanted to base the ministry of pastoral care and counseling in a faith understanding and framework.

A general contribution of creating a strong reliance between the disciplines of practical theology and pastoral counseling is that they are both based upon the same foundation; the foundation of human activity. Practical theology focuses upon the development of critical procedures for studying the phenomena of human activity and linking this phenomena to theological formulations. Pastoral counseling focuses upon ministering to human behavior guided by theological understandings. In this commonality alone there are significant enough reasons for exploring further the relationship between these two disciplines. In addition, though, and in light of the historical and theological contexts explored above, there are three other specific contributions which practical theology can make to the field of pastoral counseling.

1. Practical theology is a theology of context, and can provide specific resources to aid the current interest in relating pastoral care and counseling to their broader

theological contexts. According to Hollifield's historical analysis, the present period of pastoral care is responding to the privatized, individualistic period of Rogarian self-realization by being more concerned with the wider contexts which affect our pastoral care ministries and our theological understandings of these ministries. The methodologies being explored by practical theologians -- suspicion, retrieval, critical reflection, revised correlation method, testing the leeways, and asking prime ethical questions -- give the pastoral counselor unique resources for exploring these wider theological contexts.

As an example of this, Segundo's concept of being suspicious of ideological superstructures, and of becoming aware of the hidden motives in all pastoral actions is very helpful in reminding pastoral counselors to be aware that there is no such thing as responding in a completely objective manner, and nothing is ever unconditional. As Browning indicated, even secular psychotherapists have an underlying set of values and beliefs which influence and guide their counseling interactions. Hence, given the fact that persons all do have underlying belief structures guiding our behavior, pastoral counselors will function more effectively if they are clear about these intrinsic values and hidden motives in their own behavior, and especially in their professional behavior. Practical theology gives the pastoral counselor the methodological resources for uncovering these relevant values and motives.

Using practical theology to become more aware of one's own underlying values, biases, and un confronted prejudices will not only aid a counselor in being more conscious of the affect of these underlying contexts upon the way s/he thinks and works; it will also cause him or her to be more open and receptive to the insights, critiques, and challenges made by persons who are speaking from different contexts. Thus, as the oppressed of the world speak, as women and minorities challenge established contexts, as other nations critique American values and behaviors -- this awareness of the power and influence of hidden motives and unspoken values systems will hopefully make us pastoral counselors more willing to listen closely and honestly to their wisdom.

Another way of saying this, is to say that practical theology can aid the pastoral counselor to bring theological insight to bear to more than just the diagnosis and treatment of the client's symptoms. Having participated in weekly case conferences for the past ten years, in a variety of different settings, it has been clearly demonstrated that all therapists, including pastoral counselors, become very focused upon the client's particular presenting symptoms. While this is understandable, it has increased the tendency to center most theological efforts upon an interpretation of these symptoms and their treatment. Practical theology, with its emphasis upon reflecting critically upon all aspects of the experienced moment, and to be especially suspicious about underlying motives and

value systems, moves the pastoral theologian beyond the observed symptoms, to the counselor-client relationship, to the counselor's and client's contextual value systems, and to wider societal and historical contexts.

2. Practical Theology has an unique ability to guide and balance the complex dialogue between historical theological resources and the insights of contemporary psychotherapies.

Despite the work of the above reviewed pastoral theologians, and as noted throughout the first two chapters, one of the main critiques of current pastoral counseling is that it has the theory/theology dialogue out of balance, in that most pastoral counselors are overly dependent upon the psychological theory side of the dialogue. Hopefully, the discussion in Chapter 2 (especially pages 70-74) demonstrated effectively the unique strength of practical theology in keeping this dialogue between theory and theology alive, rich, and continually two-sided. Practical theology has the creation of effective and balanced dialogue at the heart of its process, and can provide the pastoral counselor with a variety of tools to aid him/her in avoiding one-sided theoretical captivities.

Thus, when critics complain of pastoral counseling's current love affair with secular psychotherapies, the answer is not to call for a divorce from the wisdom of these disciplines, or a retreat into pre-psychological Christian thought. Rather, the called-for corrective is to bring this new arena of human psychological understandings into fuller dialogue with the

relevant concerns and beliefs of the faith. If these critics are right, the need for developing such a more effective and balanced dialogue is one of the most important challenges facing pastoral counseling today. Practical theology can help do this.

3. Practical Theology moves beyond normative theological formulations and one scheme theologies, to provide pastoral counselors with a multi-level methodology for correlating pastoral counseling activities and theological interpretations.

As already shown, the attempt to relate pastoral counseling activity with theological understandings is certainly not a new endeavor. Along with the scholarly efforts summarized above, every candidate for membership in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors is required to interpret his/her pastoral counseling activity from a pastoral counseling perspective (however, such moments when candidates are asked for theological interpretation are still too often characterized by what Merle Jordan calls the "plop phenomenon"⁴³ -- that is, while candidates can wax elegantly about the clinical issues in their case material, there is too often an embarrassing silence or stumbling, a plop, when theological interpretations are requested).

One pervasive problem with these theologizing attempts is that they suffer from being overly dependent upon normative theological formulations. Often, when contemporary pastoral

⁴³Merle R. Jordan, Taking on the Gods: The Task of the Pastoral Counselor (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 16.

counselors attempt to speak theologically about what they do, there is a heavy reliance on normative theology, with its foundation in traditional philosophical concepts, and this tends to focus the pastoral counselor upon the traditional Christian themes of grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and covenant (we are still relying heavily upon the correlations developed by Tillich).

Authentic moments of grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and covenant are very powerful, life-changing events; and the power of these central Christian themes in the work of pastoral counselors always need to be affirmed. At the same time, pastoral counselors are not going to develop much theological richness if their only interpretation of the counseling process is that it is an arena where an atmosphere of grace allows the client to experience acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In fact, it can be effectively argued that many pastoral counselors have found a new meaning for the phrase saving grace. When asked to give a theological interpretation to their counseling work and they have nothing meaningful to say, they are saved by making reference to the general theme of grace, as well as to its theological companions, forgiveness and reconciliation. If we are going to be credible and effective theologians, we need to be able to bring many other theological themes to our pastoral counseling work.

A second pervasive problem with current pastoral counseling theological attempts is a reliance upon what I call one scheme

theologies. These attempts are concerned with developing a schematic theological formulation which informs the pastoral counseling event. In this way, they are focused upon presenting a theological result rather than an on-going methodology for doing theology in a pastoral counseling setting. The result, while often a very helpful suggestion that can be applied to the counseling process, provides the pastoral counselor with a single scheme or technique, and no more. This was Herbert Anderson's complaint in his review of Hulme's Pastoral Care and Counseling (see page 13), that another book on "applied theology" rather than "the development of a methodology" had been created.

The problem with one scheme, theological formulations is that, once picked up they tend to become the only pair of glasses that the pastoral counselor uses when speaking theologically about his/her counseling activity. Every issue and event is seen from that perspective. Even when this is a helpful and theologically appropriate perspective, it is limiting in motivating the pastoral counselor to consider many other theological perspectives and issues.

Merle Jordan recently wrote an excellent book entitled Taking on the Gods: The Task of the Pastoral Counselor (1986). His main thesis was that a theological approach to pastoral counseling was to consider clients' dysfunctional symptoms as the results of placing an over-emphasis upon some particular interest, and making it their god. At various stages in the book he contends that "Taking on the gods is a significant

responsibility of pastoral counseling. Confronting those psychic structures, forces, and images which masquerade as God;...The key listening perspective of operational theology is a hearing a person's story in terms of what or who is perceived as the ultimate authority in the psyche of that person;...I believe that it is imperative for pastoral counselors to understand the idolatry that lies at the heart of most pathology."⁴⁴

Thus, naming and confronting one's idolatries, the false gods, becomes the primary, if not only, theological methodology of pastoral counseling. This is a very credible approach, and hopefully could lead the therapist and client both to a deep exploration of their underlying value structures and hidden motives (much like Segundo's ideological suspicion). However, as a theology that is based upon one methodological scheme (discover and treat the idolatries) it has the dual danger of ignoring other theological concerns and methods on the one hand, and of becoming a knee-jerk theological response on the other hand (naming every presenting problem as the idolatry and then feeling like the theological task is done; i.e.: "alcohol is his god," "power is his god").

In contrast to one scheme theologies, practical theology is a multi-level, full theological discipline, with enough different methodological resources to keep pastoral counselors exploring a wide variety of avenues on the road map of pastoral theology. As the practical theologians of the 1980s and 1990s continue to

⁴⁴Jordan, 18, 22, 24.

develop clear and effective methodological approaches to the theological study of human activity, pastoral counselors will be missing one of the most valuable theological resources available to them if they fail to take full advantage of this ever-growing branch of theology.

In Chapter 2 a critical study of practical theology and its methodological developments was presented. In this chapter, a historical review of the theological developments and concerns in the field of pastoral counseling has been presented, and the argument given that the field of practical theology could provide some important and unique contributions to the theological tasks of pastoral counseling. It is now time to turn to a reporting and analyzing of the dissertational project, which is an attempt to provide a concrete demonstration of the rich potential that exists in relating practical theological methods to pastoral counseling theology, by developing and applying one practical theological method to a specific pastoral counseling issue.

CHAPTER 4

Christian Well-Being:

Applying a Practical Theological Methodology to Pastoral Counseling

As seen in Chapter 2, the contemporary discipline of practical theology has continued to develop its own strength and credibility over the past decade. In doing so, it is creating rich resources and and insights into the reflective study of human behavior. It is the central goal of this dissertational study to encourage pastoral counselors to greater appreciation and use of the theological and critical resources available in this growing discipline.

In this present chapter, the focus is upon illustrating this relationship between pastoral counseling and practical theology by summarizing and evaluating a project in which a particular practical theological methodology was applied to a central pastoral counseling issue. The project goal was to (1) develop a practical theological methodology, (2) use this methodology to raise a current pastoral counseling issue, and (3) explore this issue from a practical theological perspective, examining both the specific content issue and the methodological process being used.

The Methodology: A Modified
Hermeneutic Circle

The methodological method used in this project was based upon Segundo's hermeneutic circle (see Chapter 2, pages 28-30), which I modified in light of contemporary insights and developments (examined in Chapter 2, pages 36-75). I used Segundo's hermeneutic circle as the base methodology for several reasons. First, it provides a complete step-by-step process which guides the practical theologian from the experience of a series of practical events, into a reflective study and correlated dialogue with faith beliefs, to the formulation of a new theology, and finally back into the practical experience. Second, it highlights and structures the continuously circular nature of practical theology. Third, it clearly describes the critical role that the activity of suspicion has to play into the practical theological process.

The modification of the hermeneutic circle gave two new elements to it. First, while Segundo's methodological understanding of the hermeneutic circle has been developed with a high reliance upon the activity of suspicion, it has not provided enough emphasis upon the activity of retrieval. The discussion on the issue of correlation (pages 53-62) demonstrates the need for both retrieval and suspicion so that a fully mutual dialogue occurs. It is not surprising that Segundo, as a liberation theologian interested in social change, tends to emphasize suspicion over retrieval. Therefore, the first modification of the hermeneutic circle was to give equal weight to the two

activities of retrieval and suspicion, creating a two-way dialogue which is consistent with Tracy's understanding of the revised correlation method.

The second modification of Segundo's method was to further clarify the specific practical hermeneutic tasks which are involved in each of the various steps of the hermeneutic circle. These clarifications were based upon the review of current themes and issues in the field of practical theology that were made in Chapter 2. Specifically, the additional themes which the modified hermeneutic circle emphasized were (1) using the revised correlation method in accomplishing one's critical praxis, aided by such critical tools as suspicion, retrieval, leaping, critical reason, analytic memory, and creative memory (see pages 46-52); (2) evaluating one's praxis from an ethical context as suggested by Browning and McCann (see pages 62-70); and (3) creating a new hermeneutic tradition which is both faithful to the changeless Tradition, and effective in communicating to the contemporary society (see pages 22-24).

In addition, the wording of each of the four steps of the hermeneutic circle were changed in order to more adequately speak to the particular practical hermeneutic tasks contained in that step, given the modifications. Thus, this methodology was based upon Segundo's hermeneutic circle, but was changed significantly to reflect the current developments in the field of practical theology. Named a "Modified Hermeneutic Circle," the full description of this method appears on the following two pages.

A MODIFIED HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE

Step #1: A CRITICAL EXPERIENCING AND EVALUATING OF REALITY, WHICH LEADS TO ASKING QUESTIONS OF UNDERLYING SIGNIFICANCE.

Clarification:

A. Experiencing and evaluating of reality

Observe and think about human activity, watching for the reoccurring patterns of behavior, customs, themes, and rituals. Look at these activities with open eyes, as if seeing them for the first time. Wonder about why they occur the way that they do.

B. Asking questions of underlying significance

Allow this wondering to move to the asking of significant questions about the underlying meanings, motives, and reasons for these behaviors. Especially ask existential questions (about meanings, symbols, ideas, and self-understandings); sociopolitical questions (political motives, economic realities, systemic social patterns, and questions of power and control); and situational questions (what are the situations, problems, and issues facing us in the observed activities).

Step #2: APPLYING SUSPICION AND CRITICAL REASON TO THESE SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS; BEING SUSPICIOUS OF CUSTOMARY ANSWERS. AND LOOKING FOR NEW AND RETRIEVED PARADIGMS TO APPLY.

Clarification:

A. Being suspicious of customary answers

Use critical suspicion and reason to examine all prevailing concepts and practices associated with the significant questions that have been raised; both on an ideological level in analyzing contemporary social structures and practices, and on a theological level in analyzing prevailing theological interpretations and faith communications. Look for intellectual, social, and theological biases which may be affecting the customary answers.

B. Looking for new and retrieved paradigms

Because our customary answers to significant questions are often guided by that which is culturally popular, politically decreed, and economically expedient; begin to identify other sources of wisdom which go beyond the contemporary culture. Often these other sources of wisdom come from the new prophetic criticisms of the present, or from retrieving lost teachings of the past.

Step #3: CRITICALLY REFLECTING UPON PRACTICE AND THEOLOGY; CREATING A REVISED CORRELATION DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE UNDERLYING CONCERNS RAISED IN THE PRAXIS OF STEPS #1 & 2 AND A NEW EXPERIENCING OF THEOLOGICAL REALITY, AND EVALUATING THE ETHICAL CONTEXT OF THIS DIALOGUE.

Clarification:

A. Creating a revised correlation dialogue

Use the practical theological procedures associated with the revised correlation method - suspicion, retrieval, leaping, critical reason, analytic memory, and creative imagination - treating all of the procedures as equally important, to create an effective and mutually influencing dialogue between the issues raised in the praxis of steps #1 & 2, and relevant theological material.

B. Evaluating the ethical context

Guided by the ethical frameworks of Browning's five levels of practical moral thinking, and McCann's middle axioms, make an ethical review of this praxis/theology dialogue.

Step #4: DEVELOPING OUR NEW HERMENEUTIC; BY CREATING A NEW THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF OUR FAITH WITH THE NEW ELEMENTS AT OUR DISPOSAL, AND TAKING THIS NEW INTERPRETATION BACK INTO THE PRACTICAL SITUATION. THIS NEW WAY OF INTERPRETING CAUSES US TO CHANGE AND EXPERIENCE REALITY DIFFERENTLY, WHICH RETURNS US TO STEP #1.

Clarification:

A. Creating a new theological interpretation

From the dialogue of step #3, create a new theological interpretation (tradition), which is both faithful to the core Tradition of the Christian faith, and also effective in communicating this Tradition accurately into the practical situation. The reflective dialogue of the revised correlation method can challenge and change both our faith understandings and our means of communicating this faith.

B. Taking this new interpretation back into the practical situation

Having developed a new theological interpretation, begin to communicate it back into the practical situation which gave rise to the asking of significant questions. This will influence and change the situation, which allows the practical theologian to begin again the modified hermeneutic circle.

This, then, is the practical theological method -- the modified hermeneutic circle -- which was used in this dissertational project in order to explore one significant question of underlying concern within the practice of pastoral counseling. That question centered upon the issue of human "well-being" (and more specifically, Christian understandings of such well-being) as it applies to the goal of the counseling process. The reasons for choosing this particular issue is clarified further in this chapter, during the description and discussion of how each step of the modified hermeneutic circle was applied to this pastoral counseling issue.

The results of this project are given in a detailed summary and examination of the activities and reflections which occurred at each of the four steps of the modified hermeneutic circle. In each step, there is first a description of the concrete attempts at accomplishing the practical hermeneutic tasks of that particular step in relationship to the pastoral counseling issue of human well-being. Then there is a discussion of the methodological implications of the various tasks associated with each step. In this methodological discussion, the focus is first upon how this method was helpful in bringing clarity to the particular pastoral counseling issue being studied (i.e.: the goal of well-being), and next there is an analysis of the general methodological implications of relating this practical theological method to other types of concerns in the field of pastoral counseling.

A Study of Christian Well-Being Using
The Modified Hermeneutic Circle

Step #1 of the Modified

Hermeneutic Circle

Step #1 of the modified hermeneutic circle is a critical experiencing and evaluating of reality, which leads to the asking questions of underlying significance.

Experience and evaluate reality. The first practical hermeneutic task of Step # 1 is to critically experience and evaluate one's current reality. As stated in the initial discussion on doing practical theology (pages 26-27), there is no "correct" starting point in doing practical theology. On one particular issue it might start during reflection in the university, on another while doing ministry in the church, and on yet another while experiencing a social inequality. The reality which fueled the exploration of this particular issue was my personal experience with the ministry of pastoral counseling, and specifically with my vocational identification with the growing ministry of pastoral counseling specialists, most clearly marked by the creation and growth of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

There are many common themes, customs, and patterns of behavior which permeate the lives and work of pastoral counselors. One which has been of a central concern has been the ritualistic dance that exists between pastoral counselors and secular psychotherapies (see Chapter One). In reading and

studying the current discussion about this relationship, I decided to apply the modified hermeneutic circle to this particular issue. Thus, I began to look at the activities associated with pastoral counselors' use of psychotherapies with open eyes, as seeing this relationship for the first time, and to wonder why they occur the way that they do.

In doing so, I became intrigued with the most simplistic question about pastoral counseling, and counseling in general -- why is it occurring? Why do people come into a therapy room, and spend time there? What are they looking for? What do they want from the counselor?

The answer seemed to be just as simple. The basic motive to all requests for counseling has to do with wanting to satisfy a desire -- a desire for change. The counseling client wants some type of change in their life, and it is a desire for this change to somehow make life better. This simplistic, yet critical, understanding that all counseling is grounded in a desire for a change to the better led into the second task of step #1.

Questions of underlying significance. The second practical hermeneutic task of step #1 is to ask questions of underlying significance; which means focusing upon the underlying meanings, motives, and reasons on existential, sociopolitical and situational levels. The underlying significant question which followed this understanding that all counseling is grounded in a desire for a change to the better was this: What would be the criteria, goal, and view of positive life that would guide this

attempt to change? In other words, in order to desire a change to the better, the individual has to have some vision of what that better will look and feel like. People do not move in an aimless vacuum; rather, they have some vision, some goal, towards which they are aiming. To put this existentially, there is a set of meanings, symbols, ideas, or self understandings, which form a vision of positive living; which each client brings to the counseling setting, and which fuels their desire for change. Likewise, and important to understand, there is also a set of meanings, symbols, ideas, and self-understandings forming a vision of positive living; which each counselor brings to the counseling setting, and which fuels his/her counseling activity.

This is important to understand because one of the myths of therapy is that the therapist is to be "objective" in the counseling setting. Therapists talk about creating a positive, empathic, non-judgmental counseling environment, where they suspend their own belief systems, and allow the client to pursue meaningful visions of growth. However, the reality is that all therapists have some vision of positive living, and that this vision subjectively guides their counseling activity.

This vision of positive living often exists on an existential level, as an understanding of healthy, human functioning. It is the therapist's conscious or unconscious view of human nature and what characterizes a healthy change of behavior. Without such a vision, the therapist is left attempting to provide counseling without any particular direction

in which to move. In such a case, any therapeutic response would be as helpful, or unhelpful, as any other. The therapist, as well as the client, needs a guiding vision.

The discussion of pastoral counseling's attempts to discover an appropriate theological grounding in Chapter 3 clearly demonstrates this attempt at developing guiding visions -- in this case, through the development of a theology of human nature. As seen in that discussion, even Carl Rogers, the father of client-centered therapy, had a clear guiding vision of positive human nature which affected his therapeutic process.

The myth of professional objectivity, then, is modified by the realization that every therapist, as well as every client, has an underlying existential vision of positive human nature which directs his/her therapeutic activity. Through the remainder of this paper, this guiding vision will be referred to as the therapist's concept of human well-being.

This leads back to the underlying questions concerning the criteria and content of this existential vision. What is the content of this vision of human well-being? What belief system, or psychology of human nature shapes this vision held by the therapist? Does the vision of human well-being differ for pastoral counselors as compared to their secular counterparts? These, then, became the practical theological questions arrived at in step #1 of the modified hermeneutic circle, and which would lead into the work of step #2.

Methodological implications. The critical methodological

issues in using step #1 as a practical theological approach, are (1) to truly allow oneself to experience familiar activities in a fresh and open way, and (2) to be able to move from the evaluative experiencing into seeking out significant underlying questions. Cultural biases, social conditioning, and even profession training tend to box persons into unquestioned, pre-conditioned ways of viewing their experience. The Christian Church in South America has been able for centuries to give plausible reasons for the existence of minority wealth and massive poverty, and for why the church needed to align with the views of the wealthy. However, the use of the hermeneutic circle aided Segundo and other liberation theologians into moving beyond these plausible reasons, into asking significant, underlying questions about the pain of poverty.

In the same way, therapists, including pastoral counselors, have been conditioned to view professional objectivity as a central hallmark of their vocation. This myth of objectivity conditions the therapist towards discussions about theories of personality, rather than about existential beliefs about human wellness. The tendency is to portray oneself as a scientist, using and studying scientific facts. Thus, much activity is spent in attempting to prove personality theories. Living in the world of scientific dialogue, it is easy to forget that every personality theory is based upon some a priori belief system.

A good method aids one in moving beyond set boundaries and into new exploring new territory. The modified hermeneutic

circle does this for the psychotherapist, by pushing him/her beyond this scientific boundary, and into the world of underlying belief systems. In this particular case, one is pushed into the world of existential meanings and symbols of well-being. Here one realizes that all theories are based upon some system of belief.

Once this simple, but often blurred fact is realized, the asking of other significant underlying questions spring forth. As a pastoral counselor, who is involved in the activity of combining psychology and theology, there is the awareness that both psychology and theology are based upon belief systems. Such psychological/theological combinations are thus combinations of various belief systems. Given that, one can quickly wonder about the compatibility of these various systems, and wonder which belief system is forming the basic criteria that is guiding the therapeutic process.

The fact that the modified hermeneutic circle opens the door methodologically to new ways of viewing one's reality and aids the flowing forth of significant underlying questions is a very helpful process for the field of pastoral counseling. Without such a method, it becomes too easy to simply rely upon prepackaged, thought-out systems of counseling. Many of the contemporary psychotherapies provide ready-made tools of the trade, are very attractive looking, and are very powerful in their effect. Today's pastoral counselor can spend an entire career working out of a particular psychotherapeutic perspective,

be highly effective, and never think to explore the underlying assumptions and beliefs of that system. Using the modified hermeneutic circle as a method for doing theological evaluations of one's therapy encourages the pastoral counselor to break through such systemic barriers, and brings the role of theological development back into the center of one's ministry. For to ask underlying questions of human nature and well-being is to ask theological questions.

This methodological breaking through common experiences to underlying theological questions can benefit other areas of pastoral counseling activity besides the area of existential meanings of human well-being. As one begins to view counseling activity with fresh, open eyes, a wide variety of observations occur which pushes the pastoral counselor towards asking significant underlying questions. A sociopolitical example of this comes from the observation that the majority of counseling clients are women. Why is this? What are the underlying issues which bring more women than men into the therapy process? Added to this is the fact that the majority of therapists, including pastoral counselors, are men. What is the effect of this male therapist/female client paradigm?

The list of other such methodologically-inspired observations are endless: the fact that the field of pastoral counseling is predominately an American phenomenon, the issue of charging a fee for service, ways in which therapists are getting their own needs met through the therapeutic relationship, the

existence of sexual misconduct in therapy. By using the modified hermeneutic circle, the pastoral counselor can examine these and many other observations in order to discover a whole array of significant underlying questions which can then be brought into dialogue with one's theological formulations. The use of this hermeneutic circle as a methodological tool provides the pastoral counselor with a multi-layered, never-ending approach to relating one's counseling with one's theology. This will continually be demonstrated throughout the remaining steps of the circle.

Step #2 of the Modified

Hermeneutic Circle

Step #2 of the modified hermeneutic circle is the applying of suspicion and critical reason to these significant questions; being suspicious of customary answers, and looking for new and retrieved paradigms to apply.

Suspicion and critical reason. The first practical hermeneutic task of step #2 is to apply suspicion and critical reason to the significant questions raised in step #1, especially being suspicious of customary answers. The three interrelated questions raised in step #1 were: (1) What is the content of any particular therapist's vision of human well-being? (2) What belief system, or psychology of human nature, shapes this vision? and (3) Does this vision of human well-being differ for pastoral counselors as compared to their secular counterparts? And if a pastoral counselor is making use of a secular school of psychotherapy, how is the belief system about human well-being of

this psychotherapy combining with the pastoral counselor's own theological beliefs about well-being?

In raising these questions, it has already been noted that the customary, accepted answers to these issues tend to focus upon an objective, scientific viewpoint. These answers emphasize either an objective, open, non-judgmental viewpoint of human well-being (completely allowing the client to define his/her own vision of wellness), or the relying upon proven psychological theories. By doing so, the customary answers for the most part ignore any discussions about underlying belief systems.

As seen in the last section, when the counseling process is viewed with a fresh, open perspective; one is able to move beneath this objective exterior, and realize that there exists a subjective, non-scientific belief system serving as the foundation for any theory of human personality. It is with this realization that the above significant questions were formed.

In applying critical suspicion to the above analysis of these customary answers, one begins to wonder about the nature of these underlying, subjective belief systems; about their interrelationship with various counseling approaches and their affect upon the counseling process; and why they are hidden, and not discussed more frequently and openly. These three areas of wondering could lead the practical theologian into numerous different studies and analysis. Because this study was primarily concerned about the current reliance of pastoral counseling upon the techniques and perspectives of secular psychotherapies, my

suspicion and analysis of these questions led to the following conclusions:

First, that all psychotherapies and psychologies of human nature are as much faith as science. As discussed, there is a creative, subjective core of belief assumptions underneath the observable, provable, objective statements; and that in personality theory, this creative, subjective core has to do with beliefs about what determines human well-being. Is it the satisfaction of basic biological drives, as Freud suggested? Is it the development of personal power, as Adler claimed? Perhaps it is being able to find a sense of meaning for one's life, as Victor Frankl argued? Or, it might be the seeking and developing as much individual happiness and self-actualization, as Rogers believed. Each of these men were the founders of schools of psychotherapies, and each of their systems is built upon their beliefs -- their faith -- about the nature of human well-being.

Second, that we live in an era of scientific worship, in which science is our god, and scientific thought is an important cultural ritual. This accounts for the tendency to objectify psychotherapies, to view their theories as scientific realities, and to forget that there is an underlying faith system. Because of this hiddenness of the faith aspect of psychological thought, pastoral counselors continually make use of a wide variety of psychotherapeutic perspectives and techniques without examining or evaluating the underlying faith statements associated with these perspectives and techniques. When confronted with a new

psychotherapy approach, most pastoral counselors are not in the habit of asking, "What is it's belief system about human well-being, and is it compatible with my own beliefs as a Christian pastoral counselor?" Rather, the pastoral counselor more readily asks, "Will it work?" -- meaning, will it help to produce a perceived positive change in the life of the client.

These two conclusions led me to a third, and crucial conclusion. In their current reliance upon secular psychotherapies, pastoral counselors are also adopting and promoting the underlying faith systems concerning human well-being contained in these psychotherapies, and doing so without analyzing their compatibility with Christian beliefs about human well-being. It was also my suspicion that many of these psychotherapeutic faith systems are not compatible with the Christian faith, and thus, it can be effectively argued that the goal of much of contemporary pastoral counseling is towards a philosophical concept of human nature different than Christian concepts.

This suspicion helped to focus more clearly the current criticisms of pastoral counseling's reliance upon secular psychotherapies. The problem, from this perspective, is not that pastoral counselors are learning effective techniques and new information about the human psyche. As pointed out by Howard Clinebell (see quote page 10), Christian care-givers have made use of and learned from secular wisdom in every generation.

Rather, the problem is that in adopting current secular

psychotherapies without critically analyzing their underlying faith beliefs, a pastoral counselor may be unknowingly replacing basic Christian principles and beliefs with another, incompatible faith system. In our current society, it can be effectively argued that the faith systems of the popular secular psychotherapies are often linked to a view of humanity more fully influenced by the values of an individualistic, hedonistic, and anti-sacrifice cultural perspective than by values more historically Christian. Don Browning argued this point in a discussion upon the relationship between contemporary psychotherapy and the values identified as the Protestant Ethic.

On the other hand, certain modern theories of counseling and psychotherapy have, on the whole, been a significant ideological force undermining the Protestant ethic synthesis both inside and outside the church. To this extent, some modern therapies have been, to a considerable extent, countercultural. They have spawned values and attitudes that have conflicted with the dominant values of ascetic rationalism and its secular counterpart - what Talcott Parson calls "instrumental activism." Psychoanalysis, Jungian and Rogarian therapy, and the conglomeration of therapies associated with the human potential movement have all in different ways given rise to values of expressiveness, spontaneity, feeling, and openness. In addition, the humanistic psychologies have especially been antimoralistic, antiascetic, and antirationalistic in their sensibilities and values.¹

Therefore, the use of critical suspicion had raised these concerns: (1) that when pastoral counselors made use of secular psychotherapeutic methods, they often became proponents of the underlying value systems that these psychotherapies assume about the nature of human well-being; (2) that these underlying value

¹Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care, 32.

systems have often been in conflict with historical Christian values concerning human well-being; and (3) that many pastoral counselors practiced these therapies uncritically and without analyzing their compatibility with Christian because they viewed these systems as objective science, and failed to pay attention to their underlying faith statements.

Search for new paradigms. Having developed these suspicions about the present pastoral counseling practice, I moved to the second practical hermeneutic task of step #2; the task of critically searching for new and retrieved paradigms to apply. As stated, the purpose of this task is as follows: Because our customary answers to significant questions are often guided by that which is culturally popular, politically decreed, and economically expedient, one needs to begin to identify other sources of wisdom which go beyond the contemporary culture. Often these other sources of wisdom come from the new prophetic criticisms of the present, or from retrieving lost teachings of the past.

In Christian practical theology, such retrieval typically means reviewing the recorded Christian wisdom found in our scriptures and historical traditions, in order to locate relevant material; so that in step #3 this material can be brought into a meaningful dialogue with the current situation. In this particular case, where the concern was over the faith basis of one underlying theory of human well-being, the material needing retrieval was a description of Christian concepts of human

well-being.

As this task flows directly into the correlation/dialogue of step #3, I decided to design a contextual process which would assist me with both of these parts of the modified hermeneutical circle. Since Christian traditions are developed most fully within the life of the church community, I chose to place my retrieval and beginning dialogue work within that community. I prepared an eight-week study class around the topic of "Exploring a Christian Understanding of Well-Being," and invited members of Edmonds United Methodist Church to participate in this group study.

Thirty-two members of the church did participate in this study group, representing a variety of occupations, including a nurse, an engineer, a banker, an editor, a lay minister, a homemaker, a counselor, a teacher, a carpenter, a secretary, and an attorney. They brought their life experiences as practicing Christians to the class, and also their life experiences as part of the contemporary American culture. Their motivation for participating in the class came from both their existential yearnings for a deeper understanding of their Christian commitment, and their desire for more satisfying experiences in living in the current world.

The design of the class was centered around retrieval and creative imagination. The focus of the retrieval activities were on examining metaphors of well-being from scripture, and in reviewing classical Christian formulations of well-being,

including the work of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and contemporary theologians. We compared this classical Christian material to our retrieval of classic cultural formulations of well-being; including Aristotle's moderation, Epicurus' hedonism, the Stoics' self-control, Kant's sense of duty, utilitarianism, naturalism, pragmatism, communism, and current psychological themes.

The focus of the creative imagination activities was to develop a contemporary synthesis statement concerning a Christian understanding of human well-being. This process allowed the study group to carry out the hermeneutic task of reviewing and re-capturing past Christian teachings on well-being, so that these retrieved teachings could be part of our contemporary correlation. I will analyze the work of this study class in my description of step #3.

Methodological implications. Step #2 is the place in the modified hermeneutic circle where there is a central focus upon the activity of critical suspicion. The fresh, open question-asking in step #1 provides fertile soil for using one's creative abilities of suspicion in order to break through cultural, academic, and even theological biases in order to penetrate unexamined social practices, political injustices, and accepted theoretical connections. In pastoral counseling, where in recent years we have borrowed heavily and rapidly from the current explosion of psychotherapeutic thought and practice, such disciplined suspicion is an important safeguard. Properly

and regularly used, it can protect us from creating automatic theoretical and practical connections with secular perspectives without analyzing their underlying implications. This study on underlying belief systems of human well-being is a perfect case in point.

Under the discussion on step #1, I listed some other pastoral counseling issues as examples of the variety of subjects that the modified hermeneutic circle could explore. Each of these examples could be further developed with the use of critical suspicion.

As an example, one of these was the issue of the high level of women clients and male therapists. Our use of suspicion can begin to penetrate some social, sex role barriers, and cause us to wonder about the sociopolitical effect of such sex roles in counseling. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that when women experience anger or depression over the inequality in their lives, this anger and depression is labeled as a sickness. As women are encouraged to see themselves as weaker than men, and that it is appropriate for them to seek outside help, it becomes understandable why greater numbers of women see themselves as needing counseling.

However, if pastoral counselors respond to female anger and depression with the cultural label of sickness, the end result of such counseling will likely be to give women an environment for draining off their anger and depression, and thus enabling them to endure -- and remain stuck -- their unequal treatment.

Realizing the underlying sociopolitical dynamics of such therapy, through the use of suspicion, the pastoral counselor might (hopefully) diagnose the anger and depression of many women clients as appropriate responses to oppressive forces. From this perspective, the therapist can encourage the empowering of appropriate anger on the part of women rather than attempting to drain this anger. In this example, one can see how the conscious use of suspicion could lead to a very different therapeutic treatment plan.

In fact, many of the contemporary feminist therapists effectively use this method of suspicion in order to demonstrate the pervasive effects of sexism upon the counseling process. In doing so, they have developed complete new therapeutic schools which attempt to overcome this sexist bias. Three examples of this are Barbara Stevens Sullivan's Psychotherapy Grounded in the Feminine Principle,² Jean Baker Miller's Toward a New Psychology of Women,³ and Lynne Bravo Rosewater and Lenore E. A. Walker's Handbook of Feminist Therapy.⁴

Suspicion, then, is a very powerful methodological tool, and along with retrieval, it can lead the pastoral counselor into some very new ground, and dramatically new ways of doing therapy. Characteristic of the power of these two practical theological

²Barbara Stevens Sullivan, Psychotherapy Grounded in the Feminine Principle (Wilmette, Ill.: Chiron, 1989).

³Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1986).

⁴Lynne Bravo Rosewater and Lenore E. A. Walker, eds., Handbook of Feminist Therapy (New York: Springer, 1985).

activities is their direct relationship to the traditional process. Central to the on-going life of the Church, this process (see pages 22-24) continually calls for the evaluation of current traditions, in order to determine if they are being faithful to the changeless Tradition, and effective in communicating this Tradition to ever-changing societies. Intellectual suspicion is an excellent tool for examining existing and often entrenched traditions, in order to determine their faithfulness and effectiveness. Retrieval helps to clarify the crucial messages of the Tradition, so that more faithful and effective traditions can be created. If, as this study has suggested, the on-going traditional process is the life blood of the church community; then suspicion and retrieval are the pumping activities which keep this blood flowing. Pastoral counselors, as key members of the church community, need to keep this blood flowing through their activities as well.

One last reflection concerning methodological issues as they relate to the modified hermeneutic circle is this. The hermeneutic activity of this circle flows in a continuous, interrelated motion, rather than in clear, distinct steps. So, while the modified hermeneutic circle is described as four separate steps, these steps need to be conceived as flowing together and interconnected. That is why the activities of suspicion and retrieval are listed as part of both steps #2 and #3. Rather than concluding that one does suspicion and retrieval as part of step #2, and then does them again during step #3, one

ought to envision suspicion and retrieval as the activities which bridge these steps together -- aiding the practical theologian to flow from the one step into the other. It is for this reason that the description of the study class began during my summary of step #2, and will be the beginning point for step #3.

Step #3 of the Modified

Hermeneutic Circle

Step #3 of the modified hermeneutic circle is the critically reflecting upon practice and theology, by creating a revised correlation dialogue between the underlying concerns raised in the praxis of the first two steps and a new experiencing of theological reality, and evaluating the ethical context of this dialogue.

Revised correlation dialogue. The first practical hermeneutic task of step #3 is the critical reflection activity of creating a revised correlation dialogue. It is in critically developing a revised correlation dialogue that one comes to the heart and soul of the modified hermeneutic circle. In Chapter 2 the revised correlation method and the various theological activities which are associated with it (as developed by Tillich and refined by Tracy) were discussed in detail. The present discussion of the practical hermeneutic tasks of step #3 starts with a brief definitional review of the revised correlation method, and each of these specific activities.

1. Revised correlation method -- Practical theological attempts to critically correlate (to show the connection or

relationship between two or more separate items) those questions and answers that are implicit in various interpretations of the central Christian witness and those questions and answers that are implicit in various interpretations of ordinary human experience (see page 54 for fuller description).

2. Suspicion -- As seen in the last section, suspicion is being open to questioning and re-thinking existing perspectives, common practices, given social and political structures, and accepted cultural and faith beliefs (see page 47).

3. Retrieval -- The process of studying the classic writings, symbols, events, and images that make up one's cultural and religious traditions in order to unpack, re-discover, and make alive the wisdom that is within the classic formulation (see page 48).

4. Leaping -- This concept is used as a hermeneutical analogy for understanding three important aspects of the critical reflection process: (1) the doing of critical reflection out of delight because it is a natural, on-going part of life; (2) testing the leeways, in order to contest the limits between our religious traditions and our contemporary living; and (3) the realization that one is always destined to fall, leap, and fall again as no developed thought, argument, or belief statement will ever fully grasp the truth or be completed (see pages 49-51).

5. Critical reason -- The using of human reason to ask "why" present realities are the way they are (critical reason is similar to suspicion - see page 51).

6. Analytical Memory -- The attempt to uncover the personal and social genesis of present praxis in order to see the various constitutive interests, assumptions, and ideologies which undergird that praxis (analytical memory is similar to retrieval, see page 51).

7. Creative Imagination -- The invitation to image and create new possibilities beyond present praxis instead of simply accepting it fatalistically as a given (see page 52).

These are the activities that constitute the process of critically reflecting upon the relationship between one's experiences and one's theology, so that each impacts and informs the other. In step #2 the activities of suspicion and retrieval were begun. In this step, the activities of retrieval, leaping, and creative imagination are central in the correlation process. Leaping and creative imagination activities will continue to be used in step #4.

During step #2, I decided to carry out my reflective activities within the life of the church community, and developed a study class on "Exploring a Christian Understanding of Well-Being" for this purpose. As stated during the description of this study class, the object of the class was to review scriptural resources, historical faith resources, and traditional cultural resources concerning human well-being; and then to create a contemporary synthesis statement concerning a Christian understanding of well-being. The eight-week structure of the classes was as follows:

- Week # 1:** General Introduction to the Study
Introduction to Practical Theology
Praxis, the traditinary process, the
hermeneutic circle
- Week # 2:** Discussion of My Project on Christian Well-Being
Description of my use of the hermeneutic
circle to that point, my analysis of con-
temporary pastoral counseling, and the
underlying question of well-being
- Week # 3:** Review of Traditional Cultural Models of Well-
Being
Aristotle, Epicurus, the Stoics, Kant,
utilitarianism, pragmatism, naturalism,
communism, Freud, Adler, Frankl, the
human potential movement
- Week # 4:** Study of Biblical Metaphors of Well-Being
A review of principles for doing Biblical
study
A class study of relevant scriptural texts
on well-being
- Week # 5:** Study of Biblical Metaphors of Well-Being (cont.)
Summarizing and synthesizing Biblical
metaphors
- Week # 6:** Review of Historical Christian Resources
Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Wesley, and
historical Christian themes of the
Protestant Ethic, the Suffering Servant,
Liberation Theology, and Feminist Theology.
- Week # 7:** Creative Imagination
Creatively synthesizing a model of
Christian well-being for contemporary
society
- Week # 8:** Summary Discussion
Discussion on using our model of Christian
well-being and Summary

I was also working individually throughout this period on my own critical reflection upon and correlation of the practical and theological issues that this dissertational study had raised. What this eight-week study class provided was a communal structure and the continual evaluative and creative feed-back of thirty-two other Christians as I did this work. In the following summary of the activity during this critical reflection step, the references will be to both my individual study and the class experiences.

The material covered during the first two classes (introduction to practical theology, and discussion of this project on Christian understandings of well-being) have already been covered in this paper, so this present summary will start with the material presented during the third week. This class reviewed traditional cultural models of well-being. There were two reasons for examining these cultural models in the class first, and then moving into a more detailed study of Christian models. First, an understanding of the broader cultural models would help to put the Christian models into a wider societal context. Second, as all members of the class were themselves cultural products, their own thought processes were already being influenced by these various cultural models. Having some additional clarity as to the origins and growth of these perspectives would be helpful to the process of distinguishing between cultural influences and Christian influences. The following is a summary of these cultural models.

Cultural models of human well-being.

When studying the classical historical cultural models of human well-being which continue to have a wide influence upon our contemporary American society, one is basically reviewing masculine Western philosophical thought from the Greek/Roman period to the present. In our study group, we reviewed twelve of these classic models in order to grasp (retrieve) the underlying value messages about human well-being being promoted. The twelve models which the class reviewed were (1) Aristotle's model of the golden mean (where happiness is the goal, and moderation the process); (2) Epicurean-inspired hedonism; the (3) Stoic emphasis upon self-control; (4) Kant's imperative to duty; (5) Mill's philosophy of utilitarianism; (6) James' pragmatism; the influence of (7) naturalism (where as creatures of nature our well-being comes through being in tune with the processes of nature as determined by science); (8) Marx's social theory of communism; (9) Freud's emphasis on satisfying basic instinctual needs; (10) Adler's focus on creating personal power; (11) Frankl's logotherapy which states that it is meaning which gives value to life; and (12) the human potential movement's stress upon the self-actualization of all persons. The following is a brief description of each:

1. Aristotle's golden mean -- When looking for roots in Western philosophical or ethical thought, one begins with Greek contributions, especially the work of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.).

In the work Nicomachean Ethics,⁵ Aristotle dedicated ten books to exploring the nature of the Good. His conclusion was that the greatest human good was happiness, and that this happiness is achieved by finding the middle ground, the mean, between excess and defect (courage is the mean between the excess of foolhardiness and the defect of cowardice, generosity is the mean between the excess of wastefulness and the defect of stinginess). This is the golden mean -- moderation in all things, always seeking the middle ground between extremes - and it is the hallmark of Aristotelian thought.

2. Epicurean hedonism -- Epicurus (342-270 B.C.) was another Greek teacher concerned with well-being. Epicurus taught that pleasure is the highest aim of humans. The Greek term for pleasure is hedonism, hence the name for this philosophy. For Epicurus, this state of pleasure is most perfect when it is mental pleasure and passive in nature, withdrawing from that which annoys. The worst foes of passive mental happiness are groundless mental fears. When one is mentally freed from such anxieties, one can lead the good life by seeking moderate pleasures and avoiding pain. As Epicurus himself emphasized mental pleasure and withdrawal from painful sensations, he lived the life of an ascetic. However, the influence of his teachings upon Roman and later societies became more focused upon physical pleasures, and is what the current understanding of hedonism is

⁵Aristotle, Ethica Nicomachea, in The Works of Aristotle, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon, 1915).

most focused upon.⁶

3. Stoic rational self-control -- Stoic philosophy flourished in ancient Greece and Rome from about 300 B.C. to about A.D. 300. Central to its teachings was that reason is the greatest good, as it is human reason that connects all people, and connects us to God, the fountainhead of all rational wisdom. From this perspective, well-being is to obey reason and control the enemies of reason, which were the physical passions and lusts (because they perverted rational judgment). Learning to exercise self-control over and being able to deny one's internal impulses is a hallmark of the stoic lifestyle.⁷

[Note: From A.D. 300 through the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, the development of the major Western philosophical formulations which influenced popular culture and the development of Christian tradition were linked together under the direction of the Roman Catholic Church. I will summarize some of the models of human well-being from this period of time in the review of historical Christian traditions. This cultural review turns now to the eighteenth century.]

4. Kant's imperative to duty -- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) analyzed and attempted to update various aspects of Greek philosophy, including ethics. In his Critique of Practical Reason⁸ and also Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of

⁶Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, 3rd ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1970), 6-7.

⁷Ibid, 7-8.

⁸Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, trans. and ed. Lewis W. Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

Morals,⁹ Kant's main complaint with the Greek ethical theories is that they were so preoccupied with the ethical end or goal of well-being (happiness, pleasure, reason) that they gave insufficient attention to the ethical subject, the doer of the Good. Kant agreed with Aristotle that the greatest good is happiness, but that using human reason to determine the appropriate mean will not work, for as Kant wrote, "the more a cultivated reason deliberately devotes itself to the enjoyment of life and happiness, the more the man falls short of true contentment."¹⁰ Kant's substitute for the principle of the mean is the principle of the categorical imperative of duty with its explanatory maxims. Thus, the doer needs socially produced laws (created by the corporate rational will) which prescribe appropriate living, and it is the dutiful keeping of these laws which promotes human well-being.

5. Mill's utilitarianism -- John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was the founding leader of the utilitarianism movement, and among his many writings was Utilitarianism.¹¹ Utilitarianism is basically a corporate hedonism. Pleasure is still the goal of well-being, but in the utilitarian perspective, the goal becomes the collective pleasure of the group. This group pleasure is determined by choosing that which promotes the greatest amount of

⁹Kant, Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals, trans. and ed. Lewis W. Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

¹⁰Ibid, 57.

¹¹John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government, ed. Oskar Pietsch (New York: Liberal Arts, 1953).

pleasure for the greatest number of persons.

6. James' pragmatism -- William James (1842-1910), along with Charles Peirce and John Dewey, promoted the philosophy of pragmatism. Pragmatism is the philosophy that the truth of an idea is to be judged by how it works, rather than by how it looks or sounds. A proposition is true so long as it proves effective in linking the past and future, and in organizing present experiences to our satisfaction. Popular interpretation of this philosophy has created a life-style (especially in American society) which makes such effectiveness the goal of well-being, and this effectiveness is determined by the desirability of the results of actions. A crude version of this pragmatic approach is the often proclaimed "the end justifies the means."

7. Naturalism -- In 1859 Charles Darwin wrote The Origin of Species.¹² Through this famous work, western societies began to come to terms with the theory of evolution, and a new way of viewing human nature emerged -- one which emphasized the biological, natural aspects of human life. Human beings, like all species, were in a struggle for survival; and through natural selection, strong, competitive organisms with desirable survival traits would survive while weak organisms would not. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a social Darwinism philosophy existed, in which its proponents argued that

¹²Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952).

biological survival was the goal of human well-being, and the promotion of a superior race with positive survival traits the method of best achieving this goal.

Such strict naturalism has not continued in a popular vein, especially since the Nazi experiments in human breeding during World War II. However, the underlying emphases of naturalism have had an enormous influence upon the models of human well-being created during the twentieth century. Foremost among these underlying emphases are (1) defining human beings from a biological, scientific viewpoint, (2) judging human well-being from the perspective of how closely they are in tune with the processes of nature, and (3) promoting the use of natural and social scientific knowledge in determining beneficial human behavior. Behavioralism is the contemporary school of psychology which most directly builds upon naturalistic foundations.

8. Marx's communism -- Karl Marx (1818-1883), also saw the struggle for survival as a key dynamic in human experience. In his analysis, this struggle was being carried out on an economic and political level between the ruling classes and the working classes. In The Communist Manifesto¹³ and Das Kapital,¹⁴ Marx argued that human well-being was based upon collective production, and that the results of this production should be publicly owned, rather than the individual property of a few.

¹³Karl Marx, The Manifesto of the Communist Party, trans. Samuel Moore (Baltimore: Penguin, 1967).

¹⁴Karl Marx, "Das Kapital," Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, trans. and ed. T. B. Bottomore (London: Watts, 1956).

By creating publicly owned collective productivity, the survival of all humans could be maximized. The societal result of this model has been the growth of the communist political/economic system, and the ideal goal of this model is to increase human productivity and human well-being through a process in which each person contributes (works) to the collective productivity according to their ability and receives the results of this collective productivity according to their needs.

9. Freud's instinctual drives -- Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) followed the naturalism's view of analyzing human nature from a biological perspective. As one of the most influential thinkers in the field of psychology, his focus was upon the psychological development of the individual, which he saw as a biological development (one of Freud's well known statements is that biology is destiny). Freud's understanding of human nature was that the individual person is born with unconscious, instinctual drives. The two fundamental instincts are Eros, the drive for life, the sexual impulse, that which binds things together; and the Destruction instinct, the drive to destroy, aggression, the death instinct. The functioning of these two instincts fuel all human activity, as the "interaction of the two basic instincts with and against each other gives rise to the whole variegation of the phenomena of life."¹⁵

The goal of human well-being for Freud is to survive

¹⁵Sigmund Freud, An Outline of Psychoanalysis, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1949), 21.

effectively by satisfying these instinctual drives safely. In order to accomplish this task, he argued that the human psyche developed an id, the unconscious part of the psyche which contained the basic instinctual drives; a superego, (internalized social learnings about how to satisfy these needs safely (if one's superego becomes too strictly developed, it becomes focused upon suppressing and denying the instinctual drives, and thus battles the id); and the ego, the conscious, decision-making part of the psyche which attempts to discover ways of satisfying the drives of the id in ways that are both effective (responding to the id) and safe (responding to the concerns of the superego). In a well-functioning human being, these three aspects of the psyche work efficiently together to create safe satisfactions.

10. Adler's focus on personal power -- Alfred Adler (1870-1937) was also an Austrian psychiatrist who worked with Freud from 1902 to 1911. He developed a significant model of well-being through his focus upon human power. As put forth in his book The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology,¹⁴ Adler believed that all individuals are born with a sense of inferiority (being a small person in a world of larger people), and thus develop a central drive for personal power, which he also called a striving for superiority. In attempting to achieve this sense of superiority, one develops a style of life and a self-image. Human well-being is created through a style of life

¹⁴Alfred Adler, The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology (London: Routledge & Paul, 1923).

which promotes a strong, powerful self-image.

11. Frankl's logotherapy -- Viktor Frankl's work is often referred to as the "Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy," and is distinguished from Freud (who saw the strongest human drive being sexual) and Adler (who emphasized power as the strongest drive) by advocating that "the striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man."¹⁷ With his emphasis upon the will-to-meaning, Frankl represents the existential school of thought, which has had a strong influence on twentieth century thinking. From this viewpoint, the process for developing individual human well-being is to develop a clear sense of meaning for one's life.

12. The Human Potential Movement -- The term "the human potential movement" has come to refer to those schools of thought which emphasize the individual person discovering and developing her/his inner potential. Most of these schools had their birth in America during the 1950s and 1960s. Holifield describes their commonality in his book A History of Pastoral Care in America:

Such theorists as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Gardner Murphy, and Gordon Allport proposed an approach to psychotherapy that would accent the potential for growth, fulfillment, and creativity. They soon began to think of themselves as constituting a "third force" in psychology (psychoanalysis and behaviorism being the two other major approaches), a loose coalition devoted to the understanding of such human capacities as creativity, love, and self-actualization. By the time they organized themselves into an Association of

¹⁷Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy (New York: Washington Square, 1963), 154.

Humanistic Psychology in 1962, they had concluded that it was those higher capacities, rather than unconscious conflicts or habits, that most deeply defined the self....(the) result of their collaboration...later came to be known as the "human potential movement."¹⁸

Be it Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (from survival needs to the self-actualized person) or Roger's client-centered therapy, the common goal of human well-being in these human potential schools of thought is to live one's life as fully and richly as possible and the method for achieving this goal is to discover and maximize one's own creative potentials.

There is also usually a social component to the human potential perspective, as the self-actualized person strives to be in tune with other humans and the world around them, as well as with themselves. Often this social component has become a political component as well, when sociopolitical structures devalue and oppress the potential of particular persons and groups. Prime examples of this are economic oppression, sexism, and racism. In these cases, a human potential concept of human well-being is combined with a political belief in the equality of all persons to form specific agendas and perspectives.

One such combination can be seen in the feminist movement. In the Handbook of Feminist Therapy, Rosewater and Walker wrote:

The principles of feminist therapy a commitment to political, economic, and social equality for both women and men and a commitment to an equalitarian relationship between therapist and client remain unchanged....The importance of re-examining the valuing of female traits also is explored by Smith and Siegel. They argue that part of the process of teaching women

¹⁸Hollifield, 310.

how to be more powerful includes helping them value the power they already possess...¹⁹

And in The Chalice and The Blade, Riane Eisler wrote:

A central motif of twentieth-century feminist literature has been the...power of affiliation. It is a "win-win" rather than a "win-lose" view of power, in psychological terms, a means of advancing one's own development without at the same time having to limit the development of others....Then, unified into the global family envisioned by the feminist, peace, ecology, human potential, and other gylanic movements, our species will begin to experience the full potential of its evolution.²⁰

In this way, the value of self-development for all persons and all life is a core belief which fuels the feminist perspective (as well as other political expression of anti-oppression), and places it in clear agreement with the basic human well-being values of the human potential movement stated above -- with the emphasis being upon equal opportunity and equal regard in maximizing human potential.

This is not to say that these voices being raised by various oppressed groups can be interpreted as having only a politicized human potential perspective. For as they search their own experiences and insights, they find that they have their own intrinsic values to declare. This has been particularly true with the feminist movement, where the life experiences and inner drives of one half of the human population have throughout history encouraged a humanity that complements and contrasts with the values promoted by men. One expression of this is the work

¹⁹Rosewater & Walker, eds., xx-xxii. Emphasis added.

²⁰Riane Eisler, The Chalice and The Blade (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 193, 198. Emphasis added.

of Jean Baker Miller, who in formulating a new psychology for women stated that "Women...have been sustaining a special, more total dynamic...these same characteristics represent potentials that can provide a new framework...",²¹ and listed the following potentials as human "strengths" which women have emphasized: "vulnerability, weakness, helplessness, emotions, participating in the development of others, cooperation, and creativity."²² In looking at historical Christian models of human well-being, this retrieval activity will return to the feminine perspective.

As a final note to this cultural survey, in a historical culture as rich and varied as Western civilization, there are many other important models, off-shoots, and perspectives that could be added (such as Erikson's developmental tasks orientation, or Jung's treatment on the affect of the collective unconsciousness, anima/animas, and persona/shadow upon human experience). These twelve perspectives, though, give a solid cultural review of what has been important in Western attempts to understand the dynamics of a good life, one filled with psychological wellness.

In reviewing these cultural models in the church study class, we summarized the goal and method of reaching this goal for each system of well-being. The following table provides a summary of these goals and methods:

²¹Miller, 27.

²²Ibid, 29-48.

CULTURAL MODELS OF HUMAN WELL-BEING

<u>Model</u>	<u>Goal of Human Well-Being</u>	<u>Method of Achieving Goal</u>
1. Aristotle's Golden Mean	Happiness	Seeking moderation in all things (be- tween the extremes)
2. Epicurean Hedonism	Pleasure	Seeking moderate pleasures, avoiding pain
3. Stoic Self-Control	Reason	Seeking self-control of internal impulses which confuse reason
4. Kant's Sense of Duty	Happiness	Seeking to follow accepted rules, doing one's prescribed duty
5. Mill's Utilitarianism	Collective Pleasure	Seeking the most pleasure for the most number of people
6. James' Pragmatism	Effectiveness	Seeking positive results to actions
7. Naturalism	Survival	Seeking to be in tune with the process of nature
8. Marx's Communism	Collective Productivity	Seeking to work to one's ability; re- ceive to one's needs
9. Freud's Basic Instincts	Biological Satisfaction	Seeking to satisfy instinctual drives safely
10. Adler's Strive for Superiority	Personal Power	Seeking a style of life which promotes a strong self-image
11. Frankl's Logotherapy	Meaning	Seeking a clear sense meaning for one's life
12. Human Potential and Feminist Movements	Self-Actualization Equal regard for all	Seeking to maximize creative potential of all life

As the class members critically analyzed these cultural models, we became aware of the fact that these goals seemed to fall into three main areas: (1) those goals that were mainly focused upon the survival needs of human beings (Naturalism, Freud, and to some extent the Stoic model); (2) those goals that were mainly focused upon personal satisfaction and growth (Aristotle, Hedonism, Adler, Frankl, and the Human Potential and Feminist movements); and (3) those goals that were mainly focused upon the collective needs and satisfactions of the group (Kant, Utilitarianism, Marx and the Feminist movement). James' pragmatism fits in all three camps, as one might be evaluating the beneficial quality of results in relationship to any of these three areas.

Thus, it seemed clear that any full sense of human well-being would need to speak to survival needs, personal satisfaction needs, and collective social needs. With this cultural context, the study class next turned the retrieval process onto Christian models of human well-being, and specifically upon biblical metaphors.

Biblical metaphors of human well-being. The approach to and results of biblical study can be varied as the number of users who turn to the Bible for guidance. With this in mind, I had all class members spend some prior time before the fourth class in reading a portion of the book Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life, by Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen, professors at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Birch is a professor of

Old Testament, and Rasmussen is a professor of Christian Ethics. A summary of their suggestions appears below.

During class time, we briefly reviewed basic principles of historical and form criticism. We also discussed three approaches to using the Bible: (1) the fundamental approach, in which the Bible is seen as providing the reader with highly specific and binding moral instructions, and biblical content is to be followed literally; (2) the liberal approach, in which the Bible is seen as providing the reader with overarching values, ideals, and principles which are interpreted and applied to contemporary issues; and (3) the neo-orthodoxy approach, in which the Bible is seen as providing the reader with a story about the primary source of value and ethics, God-in-Christ, with whom the reader forms a relationship, out of which flows morality and ethics. Most of the class members brought some combination of the second and third approaches to their use of the Bible.

In the assigned reading material, Birch and Rasmussen presented four ways in which the Bible can function as a resource for the moral Christian life. These four ways are as follows:

1. The Bible can function as a shaper of Christian identity.

For those concerned with Christian ethics this means that the Bible is a primary source for those basic beliefs, values and attitudes which give Christians a particular identity...this use of the Bible refers to the shaping of the decision-maker rather than the decision.²³

²³Bruce C. Birch and Larry L. Rasmussen, Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976). 185. Emphasis added.

2. The Bible can function as a giver of moral imperatives.

Here we are speaking of those areas in which the Bible speaks to us by means of direct moral address indicating an ethical stand which is not optional to those who are the people of God. (Example: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...and you shall love your neighbor as yourself" - Matt. 22:37-39)²⁴

3. The Bible can provide theological perspectives which focus the church's response to ethical issues.

In its diversity the Bible provides a complete range of theological viewpoints, no one of which can be called 'the' biblical theology, but all of which might be made available as appropriate contexts for ethical response in a given set of circumstances. The appropriateness of any theological perspective offered in the biblical material must be judged on the basis of the ethical situation with constant attention that it does not distort the basic biblical self-understanding of the Church.²⁵

4. The Bible can function as a resource for decision-making on particular issues when a clear moral imperative is not already internalized within the community.

This use of the Bible starts with the issue that calls for decision. One comes to the Bible with an agenda already set. Here the use of the Bible becomes truly dialogic. The biblical material is placed into dialogue with all of those factors defining an issue in a concrete situation in the life of the church. The amount of resource material one finds in the Bible will vary. For some issues there may be places in the scripture where that same issue is directly addressed. Material pertinent to the issue at hand may be implied in stories of biblical people and events. There may be a variety of materials and perspectives on a given question. Biblical principles such as justice may apply to the given issue. When the issue is such that it is not directly addressed or even implied at all (e.g. organ transplants) then one may be forced to rely solely on the biblical witness to general values and attitudes that might inform contemporary deciding.

It is important to exhaust the full range of the biblical canon in seeking resources for decision-

²⁴Ibid, 186-187. Emphasis added.

²⁵Ibid, 189. Emphasis added.

making....An investigation of biblical resources may reveal a polarity of positions. Responsible moral judgment cannot absolutize one or other of these poles but must struggle for decision within the tension established in the biblical witness.²⁴

These four suggested uses of biblical material helped to focus our efforts as we attempted to seek biblical metaphors for a Christian model of human well-being. We divided the class members into four groups and had each group grapple with selected passages from various parts of the biblical canon. From Old Testament law material, the one group studied Deut. 5:1-22, Deut. 6:1-9, and Amos 5:21-24. From Old Testament wisdom material, the second group studied Psalms 112, Proverbs 6, Ecc. 3:12-14, and Ecc. 7:16-18. From the Gospels material concerning the teaching of Jesus, the third group reviewed Matt. 5:1-12, Matt. 18:21-35, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 6:27-36, and Luke 10:25-37. From the letters of Paul, the fourth group analyzed Rom. 12:1-15, Rom. 13, and 1 Corinthians 13.

I selected these passages based upon two criteria. First, they represented the various parts of the biblical literature; the ancient Hebrew law (including the covenant relationship with God and the prophetic witness to this covenant), a variety of Old Testament wisdom material (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes being quite varied from each other), the Gospel witness to the saving message of Jesus, and Paul's attempts to interpret this message of salvation to the various cultures in which the early Church existed. Secondly, these passages represent some of the most

²⁴Ibid, 191. Emphasis added.

quoted and influential biblical passages concerning faithful and effective Christian behavior, from the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament to Jesus' Great Commandment.

As each group worked with their scriptural passages, they summarized the wellness messages and lifestyle suggestions contained in the material. The following is the results of their retrieval work:

BIBLICAL METAPHORS OF WELL-BEING

Old Testament Law: Deut. 5:1-2, 6:1-9
Amos 5:21-24

Well-Being comes through:

1. Obedience to God's laws; including
 - A worship for God, and a spirit of reverence
 - A respect for rights of others
 - A life based upon order and stability, with time for work and a time for rest
2. Justice and right treatment of others
 - Just treatment of others must be pleasing to God and not for your own gratification.
 - Solemn behavior is no substitute for righteous living.

Old Testament Wisdom: Psalms 112
Proverbs 6
Ecclesiastes 3:12-14, 7:16-18

Well-Being comes through:

1. Living by God's commandments
 - Trusting in the Lord
 - Generosity towards others
2. Being mindful of the long-term consequences of your behavior
 - Avoid future problems and pain by emphasizing self-control, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and moderation (avoiding extremes)

Gospel Witness to Jesus: Matt. 5:1-12, 18:21-35
 Mark 12:28-34
 Luke 6:27-36, 10:25-37

Well-Being comes through:

1. A life based upon a loving attitude
 A love for God, self, and others
 God above all, others as self
 A love for all people, even those who do not
 treat you well
2. This love requires supportive action
 Humility, merciful and kind treatment of others,
 giving of oneself to aid the needs of others,
 working for peace, a willingness to forgive,
 not being judgmental

The Theology of Paul: Romans 12:1-15
 Romans 13
 I Corinthians 13

Well-Being comes through:

1. Discovering and using your own talents
 Everyone has their own special capabilities
 Use them according to God's will and commandments
 See no task as too small
 Carry out your tasks enthusiastically
 Do not spread yourself too thin
2. The greatest personal attribute is love
 This love is characterized by a lifestyle of
 being patient, kind, and forgiving
 And by not being jealous, conceited, proud,
 ill-mannered, selfish, or deceitful

Some of these biblical metaphors came as direct moral imperatives, such as the Great Commandment in Mark 12:29-31, or Paul's description of Christian love in 1 Corinthians 13. Other metaphors had to be theologically interpreted out of the scriptural material or story. An example of this is the material from the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs, as wisdom literature of the ancient Hebrew society, is constructed in the form of a wise, elderly male teacher instructing young men about how to properly lead their lives. In the material reviewed in the class (and indeed repeated throughout the Book of Proverbs) the subject is about how the young men should not allow their sexual impulses to lead them into committing adultery. The reason given for this advice is that the woman, as a wife, belongs to another man, and if he finds out he will come and seriously injure the perpetrator.

On the surface, as literal advice, this passage was problematic for myself and the class. The basic problem was with how it portrayed women as property and as temptations. There is no statement of how adultery is wrong because of how it violates the woman, but rather that the husband will be angry, because his possession has been used and damaged by another -- and thus, he is seen as justified in taking his revenge. Women are not being treated as individual subjects in the passage, but rather simply as objects of male lust -- tempting objects to be avoided. Given the patriarchal form of this advice, the quality of this passage did not seem to be on the same level as or in agreement with such egalitarian passages as the Great Commandment.

However, this passage from Proverbs became more meaningful when the class attempted to look beneath the surface form of the passage in order to examine the underlying message being expressed. As they did so, it became clear that the basic message was that in making decisions, one ought not just follow

immediate, short-term impulses (such as the sexual impulse); but will make more beneficial decisions if one takes into consideration the long-term consequences of the decision. As the class focused upon this underlying message, they could see how this theme was repeated in other biblical passages.

Likewise, they could now see the wisdom of this advice in relationship to contemporary living on both an individual level and on a societal level. The debate over many current issues, such as the nuclear energy issue, ecology, and consumerism, could benefit from this wisdom. Indeed, as we later began using our creative imagination in creating a hermeneutical synthesis of Christian well-being, this message about being aware of long-term consequences of our behavior became a key ingredient in our synthesis -- and it had its birth in a biblical passage that was at first disturbing.

In analyzing this list of metaphors, we could see some common themes: (1) remembering our covenantal relationship with God, our creator, and responding to God with appropriate worship; (2) having an equal respect and equal regard for all human beings (including ourselves), which calls for living a lifestyle based upon a perspective of love (which is defined in more detail in our summary of metaphors from Jesus and Paul); (3) discovering and developing our own unique set of personal talents, and (4) in decision-making, being mindful of the long-term consequences of our choices, which will lead us towards lives usually marked by self-control, discipline, and responsibility.

Historical Christian models of human well-being. In week six of our class, we reviewed seven of the classical Christian models of well-being from our historical traditions: Augustine's emphasis upon sin and salvation, Aquinas' combining Christianity and reason, Luther's justification by grace, Calvin and the rise of the Protestant Ethic, Wesley's personal piety and four guidelines for Christian decision-making, the influence of the Suffering Servant theme, liberation-growth themes in theology, and feminist theology. These were selected as representing a historical cross-section of Christian interpretations of human well-being.

1. Augustine's sin and salvation -- Like most of the influential Christian leaders in this summary, Augustine (A.D. 354-430) did not set out to become a great theologian of the Church, but rather was attempting to resolve issues that were plaguing him personally. In this way, Augustine was very much a practical theologian (as were most of the others being studied in this review) who had experienced questions in his living, and was trying to find answers to those questions through an encounter with the message of the Christian faith.

Augustine was the son of a Christian mother and pagan father in Northern Africa. As a young man he distinguished himself as both a learned scholar and a pursuer of physical pleasure. He became converted intellectually to the Christian faith and the moral views of neoplatonist philosophers, and through this combination understood the proper Christian lifestyle to be an

ascetic one, a lifestyle that he was not ready to chose. His prayer was "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet."²⁷ Finally, his shame that others were successfully living this life of self-denial led him into a famous emotional conversion in a garden in Milan.

From this personal experience, Augustine developed a theological understanding of human life which has remained highly influential throughout the centuries as central Christian themes. Core to the human experience is the fall and original sin of Adam. Though human beings are in their natural state good and free, they have inherited Adam's original sin and are thus, a "mass of damnation" subject to death, ignorance, and concupiscence (sensual lust).²⁸ This sinful captivity leads to pain and definitely un-well-being, and is a captivity that humans cannot escape from on their own. Thus, humans cannot create a sense of well-being on their own. This only comes from God, through the form of grace. This grace "boosts the will, strengthens and stimulates it, so that the will itself, without any coercion, will desire the good."²⁹ For Augustine, then, human well-being comes as a saving gift from God and is characterized as an ascetic life whose goal is a love of God and an internal sense of peace, and is lived out through self-control, denying physical pleasures, and doing good deeds.

²⁷Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon, 1971), 20.

²⁸Ibid, 44.

²⁹Ibid, 45.

2. Aquinas' combination of Christianity and reason --

Augustinian Neo-Platonic thought was the main shaper of Western Christian theology until the thirteenth century, when the recovery of Aristotelian philosophy, the rise of universities throughout Europe, and a renewed interest in scholarly learning ushered in a new period of scholasticism, which marked the highest intellectual achievements of the Middle Ages. The most influential scholar from this time was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

Aquinas was a simple, deeply religious, prayerful man; and an active theologian whose work was marked by a clarity, a logical consistency, and a breadth of presentation which has placed him among the great teachers of the Christian Church.³⁰ Aquinas' mission was to build a theological system which combined Aristotle's teachings with Christian doctrine. Towards this end, one of his main arguments was that there is no conflict between human reason and Christian faith. If any conflict seemed to exist between philosophical conclusions and faith doctrines, it was because the philosophy was based upon faulty reasoning. Aquinas attempted to use rational arguments to show the reasonableness of faith statements, the hallmark of this being his five "proofs" for God.

Because of his reliance upon Aristotle, Aquinas' understanding of human well-being is based upon both Aristotelian and Christian thought. Like Aristotle, Aquinas argued that happiness

³⁰Walker, 3rd Ed., 245.

is the goal of human well-being. Like Augustine, Aquinas argued that this goal could only be reached through direct communion with God. God gives grace to certain individuals to help them overcome the influence of sin and achieve this communion. This grace comes through the sacraments of the Church. Along with God's grace, the other important ingredient in achieving happiness is the proper use of reason. Reason guides proper Christian behavior, both individually and corporately. Towards this end governments should be based upon the organized use of reason: safeguarding such important human rights as life, education, religion, and reproduction; and developing just laws which do not contradict divine laws (given through scripture and Church edict).

3. Luther's Justification by grace -- One of the most important and dramatic persons in the development of Christian thought was Martin Luther (1483-1546). Like Augustine, Luther's motivation in beginning the watershed historical movement of the Protestant Reformation was in attempting to resolve personal discontent. But in contrast to Augustine who found peace in a life of asceticism, Luther's discontent came directly from not being able to find any such peace. A serious young man given to depression, Luther entered a monastery at age twenty-one in search of a sense of God's acceptance of him. He excelled at monastic life, to the point that his continuous fasting and physical mortification caused his body permanent harm. Yet there was no peace, no sense of well-being. Out of this personal

frustration came Luther's faith-shattering pilgrimage to Rome, his study of scripture which convinced him that humans cannot achieve their own salvation, and his proclamation that we are saved through grace alone. From here developed the Reformation.

Like Augustine, Luther saw human well-being as being a gift from God, and something that we cannot achieve upon our own, as the basic human condition is that of a sinner. Thus, the goal of human well-being is to experience a lifelong sense of mental peace which only comes through God's justification by grace. While Luther was most concerned with the fact that this justification meant the assurance of future salvation, it is also this justification which brings well-being in this life. For though we remain living in a state of sin, this justification brings changes to this life; "For he [God] first purifies by imputation, then he gives the Holy Spirit, through whom he purifies even in substance."³¹

Because of Luther's unyielding view of the sinfulness of human beings, it was difficult for him to advocate the development of any human attribute in an effort to increase one's well-being. Illustrative of this is his treatment of human reason which he both called a "very useful tool," and a "whore." He saw reason the most important of all things human -- the inventor and mentor of all the arts, medicines, laws; and the provider of whatever positive human wisdom, power, and glory we

³¹Martin Luther, The Disputation Concerning Justification, in The Works of Luther, Vol. 34, Philadelphia edition (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1943), 168.

humans are capable of. At the same time, reason is under the same curse of all things humans, as fallen sinfulness. Against the Gospel, reason takes the side of flesh against spirit, and is part of human sinfulness. Thus, Luther was a very vocal opponent of Aquinas' attempts to marriage human reason to the faith.³²

4. Calvin and the Protestant Ethic -- As another major figure of the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin's (1509-1564) views had many similarities with Luther (faith over works, priesthood of all believers, Bible basis of Christian teachings, and justification by grace). Calvin is included in this summary because of his belief that Christian teachings should reform earthly society. To promote this reform, Calvin lectured and wrote on politics, social problems, and international issues, and put these principles into effect in Geneva.

Calvin saw Christian-inspired law as having three functions: (a) to show humans their sin, misery, and depravity, (b) to restrain the wicked, and (c) to reveal the will of God to those who believe.³³ Through these uses of the law, human behavior and social order are both organized. Obedience of the law and order of societies reformed by Christian principles was the appropriate human lifestyle.

Calvin's influence extended far beyond Geneva. Because of his writings, his pattern of church government in Geneva, the

³²Gonzalez, 3: 39.

³³Ibid, 133.

creation of a Calvinistic academy, and his commentaries and constant correspondence, he molded the thought and inspired the ideals of the Protestantism of France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and the English Puritans.³⁴ The effect of this wide-spread influence was multi-faceted. One of these effects was the creation of a powerful model of human well-being that continues to be a major influence in contemporary societies. That model is known as the Protestant Ethic.

The Protestant ethic is a set of attitudes that stress the positive value of work, self-discipline, and personal responsibility. A person's work (or calling) comes from God, and is one of the best ways to demonstrate one's faithful response to God. The results of this labor should be used to promote one's basic security, and to produce more economy. Self-discipline enables one to control negative, wasteful physical passions, which threatens one's basic security, and does not produce worthwhile industry.

This Protestant ethic life-style is dedicated to the goal of production, and interpreting this production as an offering to God, a benefit to one's society, and in tune with the Calvinistic desire to reform earthly society according to Christian principles. The means to this production is cultivating a life of personal responsibility. Personal responsibility calls for the individual to be dedicated, thoughtful, and have foresight so that one's energy is successfully focused upon production; and to

³⁴Walker, 356.

resist temptations, so that one does not waste energy, time, and savings on either evil or frivolous activities.

According to the German sociologist, Max Weber, in his famous book, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904) this lifestyle of glorifying work and demeaning pleasure has produced the economic system of capitalism. Nowhere was this spirit more fully developed than in the English Puritans who had a profound affect upon the founding and development of American society.³⁵

5. Wesley's personal piety and the four guidelines for decision-making -- In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries two movements arose in response to the Protestant Reformation (and the concurrent Renaissance): Rationalism, which questioned many of the intellectual foundations of Protestant thought and gave rise to the contemporary emphasis upon scientific perspectives; and Pietism which sought to deepen Protestant faith on a personal level. The main marks of Pietism, which began in Germany and spread to England, were:

an emphasis on personal piety; the practice of forming small groups to promote that piety, while at the same time implying that the church at large was incapable of performing that duty; the stress on personal reading of Scripture; the feeling that the core of Christian doctrine must be simple, and that it is the theologians who complicate it; and the emphasis on the ministry of the laity. All of this was placed in an epistemological context in which personal experience was more important than communal faith, and sometimes even more important than historical revelation.³⁶

³⁵Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. R. T. Tawney (New York: Scribner, 1958).

³⁶Gonzalez, 276.

Individual piety, then, is the goal of human well-being for the Pietists. There were several religious outgrowths of this movement, including John Wesley and the Methodist Church. Wesley (1703-1791), like Luther before him, strove unsuccessfully to work out his salvation (forming a holiness club, traveling to Georgia to preach to the Indians), and finally had a conversion experience in which he felt God's love for him unconditionally given. Influenced by the German Moravians, Wesley began preaching his brand of pietism to the English masses, and forming class meetings, out of which grew the Methodist Church.

Some of the hallmarks of Wesley's viewpoints on Christian living were:

a) A belief in a universal prevenient grace open to all persons, in contract to the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and unconditional election.

b) In receiving justification by grace at our conversion, the Christian also receives sanctification (a process that encourages the person to right living and moves them towards entire sanctification which is also called "Christian perfection"). This state of sanctification does not mean that the Christian no longer errs, but that s/he no longer willfully breaks the laws of God, and acts out of love. Any error is of an innocent, unwillful nature.

c) The four guidelines given to the individual Christian for making life decisions are a reliance upon scripture, a study of Christian tradition, the use of human reason, and the evalua-

tion of personal experience. Using these four tools, and relying upon the sanctifying activity of God, the individual is capable of creating a life of well-being based upon personal piety.

6. The Suffering Servant Theme -- While no major theological school of thought or Church body has been created upon the Suffering Servant theme, this motif has inspired and afflicted Christians throughout the ages. The basic message in this theme is that as Christ suffered in his earthly life and indeed willfully gave himself to this suffering and turned it into a crown of glory, we too are glorified in heaven when we accept earthly suffering (as redemptive suffering) or dedicate ourselves to personal hardship in order to meet the needs of others. Thus, the goal of human well-being is heavenly redemption, and the method of achieving this goal is either redemptive suffering (which is the yielding to the suffering caused by external forces) or personal sacrifice (which is the self-chosen sacrifice in order to promote the present well-being of another).

On a positive side, this theme has provided motivation for some powerful human ministries in which persons have put concern for their own well-being aside in order to minister to the needs of others. Mother Teresa is a excellent example of this in our time. However, on a negative side, this theme has more often been used as a rationalization used to placate oppressed persons or groups, and to keep them from fighting against social inequalities. The masses of poor in South America, and

minorities and women in our American society would be examples of this use of the Suffering Servant motif, as often seen in the themes promoted in Black gospel music.

7. Liberation and Growth theologies -- In counterpoint to the Suffering Servant theme are the theologies of liberation, as represented in the work of: Gustavo Gutierrez³⁷ and Juan Segundo³⁸ in South America; James Cone³⁹ in promoting Black liberation theology; Rosemary Ruether and other contemporary feminist theologians (see below); and the theologies of growth and human wholeness, such as the work of Howard Clinebell⁴⁰ and others in relating the Christian message to themes arising from the human potential movement. The core message here is that Jesus came not to encourage the endurance of suffering, but to liberate the rejected and the oppressed from the evils of injustice, and help each of us to fully realize our birthright of being born in the image of God.

In liberation theology, this liberation theme is seen as a strong cord throughout the scriptures. As Cone stated, like the ancient Israelites, God has chosen the Black people "not for redemptive suffering but for freedom. Black people are not elected to be Yahweh's suffering people."⁴¹ The following quote

³⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973).

³⁸Segundo, The Liberation of Theology.

³⁹James H. Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970).

⁴⁰Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Rev. ed.

⁴¹Cone, 108.

by Clinebell shows how these liberation and growth themes are related to Christian scriptures and theology:

Liberation, in its biblical meaning is both personal and societal. Both sin and salvation are communal and social, as well as individual. Here are some New Testament liberation themes, emphasizing the crucial importance of inner liberation of the mind and spirit: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). "We are not children of the slave but of the free woman...stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 4:31-5:1). "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). The prophetic emphasis on justice underscores God's intention that society and its institutions be liberated so that they will nurture rather than negate human wholeness. Jesus, who shows us God's love in action, identified himself with the oppressed and rejected of his society.

Liberation theology -- including Latin America, African, black, and feminist theology -- emphasizes that God is understood as liberator in both the Old and New Testaments. God's promise of liberation is unfulfilled if only the privileged of the world are free while the social, economic, and political structures of society that cripple the masses are left unliberated....People who are thus involved (in self-growth and social liberation) become aware of their worth and power in God's sight and of the image of God in which all persons are created and re-created.⁴²

From this liberation-growth perspective then, the goal of human well-being is social equality and personal wholeness. The method of achieving this goal is through striving to overcome sociopolitical inequalities and prejudices and to promote the maximizing of individual growth and potential of all individuals.

8. Feminist theology -- In our study group, we reviewed feminist theology as one theologies of liberation. In my own

⁴²Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Rev. ed, 54.

retrieval process, the critique by women of patriarchal culture, and their uplifting of human values from the feminine perspective has long been an influence upon my life and work. No model of human well-being can be constructed without incorporating these voices.

The voice of the feminist perspective has been raised throughout Western history. There are many books which trace this history, The Chalice and The Blade,⁴³ by Riane Eisler being a strong example of such a feminist historical statement. A common wellness theme for these women has been the theme of equality. In Christian theology, this equality is most clearly symbolized in the concept of the imago dei -- both male and female being created in the image of God.

However, the theology of the fall has historically been used to justify patriarchy (Eve's sin being worse than Adam's). Even strong, visionary Christian women have accepted this fall theology. An example of this would be Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). Attached to a Benedictine monastery, in 1148 she broke free of the authority of the monks, and started an independent sisterhood and convent. She maintained this independence, began a prophetic and highly popular ministry centered on healing and communicating visionary statements. She stressed an equality between men and women, which was disturbed by the fall, but which will be restored after the final judgement when "absolute peace and tranquility will reign everywhere by

⁴³Eisler, 1987.

divine order."⁴⁴

Equal regard and equal opportunity for all persons continues to be a hallmark of human well-being for feminist theologians today. Rosemary Radford Ruether, in Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology, stated that feminist theology is "seeking an alternative, egalitarian Christianity;"⁴⁵ and that "in contrast to these patriarchal anthropologies there have been, throughout the entire history of Christianity, theologies of woman's original equality with man, restored in Christ."⁴⁶

Ruether distinguishes between five distinct types of feminist egalitarian anthropologies arising out of Christianity.

a) Eschatological feminism -- The belief that men and women were equal before the fall, and restored to this equality through the work of Christ.

b) Liberal feminism -- Creation is tied to the imago dei rather than to the fall, in which all persons, male and female, are seen as equal, sharing in a common human nature and possessing equal rights. Any human experience which is less than this equality is a fall into injustice and social reform is needed to restore rightful equality.

c) Conservative romantic feminism -- Romantic feministic perspectives stress the differences between masculine and

⁴⁴Emilie Zum Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, Women Mystics in Medieval Europe (New York: Paragon, 1989), 3-38 (direct quote from 35).

⁴⁵Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon, 1983), 34.

⁴⁶Ibid, 99.

feminine traits, and uplifts the female traits as more pure (more in line with the imago dei) -- such traits as altruism, love, self-giving, cooperation, peace. Conservative romantic feminism relates these more purely feminine traits to home and child-rearing, and views women as blessed when they stay out of less worthy worldly matters.

d) Reformist romantic feminism -- Men and male institutions need to be reformed by women so that the more worthy feminine traits can begin to transform the current egotistical, conflictual, and violent patriarchal society; with a more nurturing, egalitarian, peaceful society.

e) Radical romantic feminism -- This form of feminism despairs of reforming ambiguous and evil male institutions and withdraws into a female sphere as a separatist enclave of female values of love, relatedness, and mutuality.⁴⁷

Ruether concluded this analysis by suggesting that contemporary feminism discover a creative synthesis between liberal and romantic feminism which uplifts the important truths in each viewpoint. In doing so, Ruether rejected the radical concept that only females have the higher human attributes, and concluded:

There is no valid biological basis for labeling certain psychic capacities, such as reason, "masculine" and others such as intuition, "feminine." To put it bluntly, there is no biological connection between male gonads and the capacity to reason. Likewise, there is no biological connection between female sexual organs and the capacity to be intuitive, caring, or nurturing.

⁴⁷Ibid, 99-109.

Thus the labeling of these capacities as masculine and feminine simply perpetuates gender role stereotypes and imports gender complementarity into each person's identity in a confusing way....We need to affirm not the confusing concept of androgyny but rather that all humans possess as full and equivalent human nature and personhood, as male and female.

Thus the recovery of holistic psychic capacities and egalitarian access to social roles point us toward that lost full human potential that we may call "redeemed humanity." Redeemed humanity, reconnected with the imago dei, means not only recovering aspects of our full psychic potential that have been repressed by cultural gender stereotypes, it also means transforming the way these capacities have been made to function socially. We need to recover our capacity for relationality, for hearing, receiving, and being with and for others...⁴⁰

Feminist theologies, though varied, do have some common themes which speak to values of human well-being. They are values which stress the importance of equal regard and opportunity, the developing positive, mutual relationships, peaceful cooperation, creativity, and nurturance. These values come from a theological understanding of human nature as being created in the image of God/ess -- the divine ground of both male and female -- who is mutually rational and intuitive, strong and weak, our nurturing mother/father, and our caring, sharing friend.

These eight models of Christian well-being, emerging from our historical traditions, are quite varied and even at times in conflict. As was done with the cultural models, they are summarized on the next page in a table format, focusing upon their goal of well-being and method of achieving that goal.

⁴⁰Ibid, 111, 113.

HISTORICAL CHRISTIAN MODELS OF HUMAN WELL-BEING

<u>Model</u>	<u>Goal of Human Well-Being</u>	<u>Method of Achieving Goal</u>
1. Augustine's sin & salvation	Love of God Internal Sense of Peace	Seeking relation- ship with God, & developing self- control, denying physical pleasure, doing good deeds
2. Aquinas' reason & Christianity	Christian Happiness	Seeking, by God's grace, a Christian communion; and to guide one's life with reason
3. Luther's justification by grace	Internal God-given Peace	Seeking God's justification by grace which will purify the sinner
4. Calvin and the Protestant Ethic	Christian Reformed Societies & Indivi- dual Production	Seeking obedience to Christian law, and personal res- ponsibility
5. Wesley's Pietism & Guidelines	Individual Piety	Seeking God's sanctification & guidelines of scripture, tradi- tion, reason, and experience
6. Suffering Servant	Heavenly Redemption	Accepting redemp- tive suffering or personal sacrifice in serving others
7. Liberation & Growth Theologies	Social Equality Individual Wholeness	Seeking to over- come sociopolitical inequalities and seeking to maximize personal growth
8. Feminist Theologies	Human Equality Mutuality, Nurturance Cooperation, Peace	Giving equal regard to both female and male, seeking a redeemed humanity

In the retrieval activities of listening to and attempting to understand the wisdom of these various models, four general themes emerged:

1. Common to all the themes is a concern with responding to God's relationship with us (most often referred to as God's redemptive grace) as essential to well-being from a Christian perspective.

2. There was a general theme around developing a sense of well-orderliness (personal responsibility, self-control, hard work, taking care of security issues) which was developed most strongly in the models of Aquinas, Calvin, and the Protestant Ethic.

3. Several models emphasized the need for corporate well-being, in which the positive treatment and regard of humans as a group is seen as an important component for the wellness of all the members. This is seen (though with different suggestions for creating the corporate well-being) in such models as Calvin, the Suffering Servant theme, liberation theologies, and feminist theologies.

4. The last theme was around seeking individual, here and now peace and happiness, and can be seen in such diverse models as Augustine, Luther, Wesley, liberation theologies, growth theologies, and feminist theologies.

It ought to be noted, as well, in this correlation of questions and answers between culture and faith, that one of the results of this retrieval and analytical work is that the

question of human well-being has clearly been shown not to be simply a contemporary question. On the contrary, it has been asked throughout the ages, in every generation, by Christians and non-Christians alike. And as the lives of Augustine, Luther, and Wesley demonstrate, this question has often risen out of personal dissatisfactions and discontentment -- the individual seeking some change to make their life feel better. Thus, the activity taking place in the contemporary pastoral counseling setting is not new. Rather, it is being motivated by a human need as old as the human race itself.

Having gone through this retrieval and analytical process, leaping and testing the various leeways of our historical human context, the class now had a number of models of human well-being, with a variety of goals and suggestions for reaching those goals, and some general themes. It was now time to begin to process these models and themes in preparation of creating a new hermeneutic, a new synthesis. This processing was carried out within the context of the second practical theological task of step #3, which is to evaluate the ethical context of this dialogue, using the frameworks provided by Browning and McCann (see pages 62-70).

The Ethical Context. As the counseling question that is being explored in this project is itself an ethical question, the material gained through the revised correlation process falls readily into McCann's and Browning's systems. When developing practical theological principles, McCann's suggestion is to

create guiding principles and middle axioms which can be used for aiding one's particular decision-making. In the models above, the overarching goals of human well-being are provided as guiding principles, and the prescriptions for achieving these goals are provided as middle axioms. Thus, the material is already presented in this form.

Examining this material from the perspective of Browning's five levels of practical moral thinking produced an interesting observation. In the five levels, the ethical movement goes from a metaphorical level (one's understanding of the ultimate context of reality), to an obligational level (one's understanding of what one ought to do in order for life to be experienced more positively), to a tendency-need level (what humans want and need on a more scientific level), to a contextual-predictive level (to put one understandings into relationship with contemporary sociological, psychological, and cultural issues and contexts), and finally to a rule-role level (creating the specific rules and roles for each particular situation).

In analyzing these various models, one begins to see that the various models start at different points along these levels of moral thinking. Some of the cultural models begin with an analysis of human well-being on a tendency-need level, determine their goal of well-being from that level, and then attempt to promote this goal by moving through the fourth and fifth levels. Aristotle's golden mean, Epicurean hedonism, naturalism, Freud's basic instincts, and Adler's superiority are examples of these

types of models. Many of the Christian models emphasize the metaphorical level, and develop their models from there -- giving the strong God-centeredness to their models; such as Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther. Other models take their starting place at the contextual-predictive level, and create their goal of well-being out of a current contextual issue or process -- such as pragmatism, suffering servant, liberation theology, growth therapies, and feminist theologies. The difference here is that while pragmatism starts and stays on level four and five; suffering servant, liberation theology, growth therapies, and feminist theologies start at that level, move back to level one, and create their models from there (though continuing a strong contextual flavor to their models).

As one begins to see how these various models move along the practical moral thinking continuum, it helps to explain their different emphases and goals and helps to give additional clarity to the comparison process. It is also helpful in preparing to do one's own hermeneutical synthesizing, as one can make a conscious decision at which level s/he wants to begin in his/her own creative process.

With this, the critical step #3 of modified hermeneutic circle is completed. This completion is only temporary, however, for no issue is ever completely resolved. As one continuously works with an issue, and moves around the circle over and over, s/he will continually re-enter the critical reflective work of step #3.

Methodological implications. As stated above, one of the methodological implications is that this step is never done. Not only will one return to this step as s/he continues around the modified hermeneutic circle, but one cannot help but realize how their retrieval and critical analysis only begins to touch the surface of potential helpful information. Of the two areas surveyed, Western culture and Christian faith, only a sampling of models were surveyed. While an attempt was made to cover the most significant (in terms of the strength of their influence), there are many that could be, and should be explored. Along with these influential models, there are many alternate ones which might have very important critiques to provide.

The Christian mystic tradition is an example of a rich historical movement not reviewed in this retrieval activity, and would include such theologians as Plotinus, Hildegard of Bingen (who was mentioned in relationship to feminist theologies), Meister Eckhardt, Jacob Boehme, George Fox, Juliana of Norwich, and Theresa of Avila. Then there are all the rich cultures and faiths which exist outside of Western culture and Christian faith, such as the Eastern religions, and Native American perspectives (which have a very strong critique of how the Protestant ethic emphasis upon production has often been very short-sided in caring for the long-term needs of our planet and the other inhabitants with whom we share it).

In terms of this dissertational study, I believe that the comparison of significant models of well-being in Western culture

and Christian faith is sufficient for demonstrating the use of the modified hermeneutic circle, and developing a helpful Christian model of well-being. However, in terms of on-going life, it is clear to me that the correlation dialogue has many more voices from which to hear.

A second, related methodological issue is the issue of the revised correlation method itself. As seen in the discussion on the current debate over the use of this method in practical theology (see pages 53-62), one of the critiques of this method is the one leveled by Rebecca Chopp and the liberation theologians against the existential nature of the questions with which the revised correlation method tends to be used. McCann's response was that any practical theological perspective is going to be approached with some user bias -- be it a existential flavor, a sociopolitical bias, or something else.

As this pastoral counseling inquiry has to do mainly with understanding the nature of personal well-being, it seems very appropriate for the revised correlation model to be used in an existential manner. However, I do think that any existential issue needs to be dealt with within the context of the wider environment. Thus, it would be a mistake to only raise the wellness question on an individual level and ignore the many extremely important social, political, and ecological issues which directly impinge upon that well-being. Whatever model is finally developed, it would be sorely lacking if it does not include a recognition of the importance of these corporate issues

upon the experience of human well-being.

Whereas the activity of suspicion was central in step #2, retrieval was clearly the key practical theological activity in step #3. This is because that in order to create an effective dialogue (via the revised correlation method), one must first hear the various voices involved. This is the task of retrieval. As one listens to the various ways in which the questions are asked and answered, and begins to see various themes surfacing, the dialogue is begun. This dialogue of the revised correlation method will continue into step #4 as the practical theologian uses leaping and creative imagination (the core activities of this step) to synthesize these themes into a new hermeneutic.

In the ethical review, the use of Browning's five levels of moral thinking was especially helpful, as it clarified the level on which different models were asking their question about human well-being. Realizing that persons were beginning their inquiry on different levels of concern aided in coordinating the dialogue. Rather than saying this person is right and this person is wrong, one is able to see that they are looking at different aspects of the problem, as in the age-old story of the blind men describing different parts of the elephant. Browning's system gives the practical theologian a map to help him/her determine, as s/he listens to each voice in the discussion, exactly which part of the ethical elephant is being described.

I also found it very helpful to provide myself with a corporate, ecclesiastical context in which to do my retrieval and

analytical tasks. The insights and feedback of the study class gave an increased balance to the process. It was especially powerful to see members of the class recognize where some of their own beliefs and behavior tendencies had their philosophical roots. Many of these long-held perspectives had never been questioned, and as the class grappled with the various models of well-being, people were able to make some quality-of-life decisions.

An example of this was that as hard-working middle-class American consumers, many of the class members were surprised in realizing how many of their perspectives came from the Protestant ethic motif, and how many of their decisions were based on here-and-now short-term factors rather than long-term consequences. As they began working with a more long-term consequences perspective, they found that they had to face tough questions about such issues as the effect of consumerism on the state of the world's ecology, the sociopolitical conditions in many third world countries, and upon the demand for more energy sources like oil from Alaska and nuclear energy.

In the earlier two steps, it was noted that the modified hermeneutic circle can be used methodologically to theologically explore many different issues raised in the praxis of pastoral counseling. An example given was the issue of women clients/male counselors. In the past five years I have heard two different ethical theologians speak to this issue in addressing pastoral counselors: Dan Rhodes, professor of ethics at the School of

Theology at Claremont, and Rebecca Parker, an United Methodist feminist theologian. In bringing in insights from various biblical, theological, and cultural roots in order to warn of the potential dangers involved becoming part of a patriarchal system attempting to limit women's power by treating their anger as sick, both Rhodes and Parker were methodologically using this revised correlation model. It is my contention that in more closely binding pastoral counseling with practical theology, the field could benefit continually from this process.

One complaint about the modified hermeneutic circle as a method might be that most pastoral counselors, as clinicians, do not have either the time or skills to take every pastoral counseling issue and move it through the steps of the modified hermeneutic circle. As seen in the summary of this last step, it can be a long and involved process. This is a valid concern, and will be dealt with further in the summary chapter. It is time now to turn to the fourth and last step of the modified hermeneutic circle.

Step #4 of the Modified

Hermeneutic Circle

Step #4 of the modified hermeneutic circle is the developing of the practical theologian's new hermeneutic; by creating a new theological interpretation of his/her faith with the new elements at her/his disposal, and taking this new interpretation back into the practical situation. This new way of interpreting causes one's activity to change and experience reality differently,

which returns the practical theologian to step #1.

A new theological interpretation. The first practical hermeneutic task of step #4 is to create a new theological interpretation which is both faithful to the core Tradition of the Christian faith, and also communicating this Tradition effectively into the practical situation (remembering that the reflective dialogue of the revised correlation method of step #3 can challenge and change both our faith understandings and our means of communicating this faith). In this current use of the modified hermeneutic circle, the new theological interpretation being developed is a Christian model of human well-being.

The specific hermeneutic tools used in this step are leaping and creative imagination. Having listened to the various voices from our culture, our scriptures, and our faith tradition, it is now time to leap out with our own creative abilities and imagination in attempting to formulate a faithful and effective model for our day -- one which is based upon a critical analysis and synthesis of past wisdom, current concerns, and our own insights.

In creating this new hermeneutical model of Christian well-being, one's imaginative leaping is to be based upon an interaction and dialogue with the retrieved wisdoms during step #3. The following chart summarizes the common messages and underlying concerns in each of the three areas reviewed; cultural themes of human well-being, biblical themes of human well-being, and historical Christian themes of human well-being.

Cultural Themes of Human Well-Being

1. Well-being is based upon satisfying human survival needs.
 - a. Seeking to increase one's potential for survival by being in tune with the processes of nature
 - b. Seeking to safely satisfy one's basic instinctual drives
 - c. Seeking to control internal impulses which confuse one's reason and threatens one's security
2. Well-being is based upon promoting personal satisfaction and growth.
 - a. Seeking personal happiness by moderation in all things
 - b. Seeking personal pleasure, and avoiding personal pain
 - c. Seeking a lifestyle which promotes a strong self-image
 - d. Seeking a clear sense of meaning for one's life
 - e. Seeking to maximize one's own creative potential
3. Well-being is based upon focusing on the collective needs and satisfactions of the group.
 - a. Seeking to follow rationally developed rules and doing one's duty as understood by the wider society
 - b. Seeking the most collective pleasure for the greatest number of people
 - c. Seeking collective productivity, security, and happiness by working according to one's abilities, and receiving according to one's need

Biblical Themes of Human Well-Being

1. Well-being is based upon remembering our covenantal relationship with God.
 - a. Seeking to follow God's laws about human behavior
 - b. Seeking to trust in God's grace to care for us
 - c. Seeking to give God appropriate worship
 - d. Seeking to love God above all else
2. Well-being is based upon having equal respect and equal regard for all human beings (including ourselves).
 - a. Seeking equal justice for all persons
 - b. Seeking to achieve peace between peoples
 - c. Seeking to love all persons (love being defined as being humble, merciful, kind, forgiving, patient, and giving oneself to aid the needs of others, and not being jealous, conceited, proud, ill-mannered, selfish, or deceitful)

3. Well-being is based upon discovering and developing our own unique set of personal talents.
 - a. Seeking to discover our own special capabilities
 - b. Seeking to develop these talents to their maximum
 - c. Seeking to use these talents to the glory of God
4. Well-being is based upon being mindful of the long-term consequences of our choices.
 - a. Seeking to avoid impulsive, here-and-now short-term decisions which might create future problems and pain
 - b. Seeking to emphasize self-control, discipline, honesty, responsibility, and moderation

Historical Christian Themes of Human Well-Being

1. Well-being is based upon accepting God's grace for our life.
 - a. Seeking, through God's grace, an assurance of God's present love for us and our future redemption
 - b. Seeking God's sanctification (the gradual improvement and perfection of human behaviors)
2. Well-being is based upon a life of well-orderliness.
 - a. Seeking to develop a lifestyle which emphasizes personal responsibility and hard work
 - b. Seeking self-control of physical passions and impulses
 - c. Seeking to take care of one's security concerns
3. Well-being is based upon being concerned with corporate well-being.
 - a. Seeking to develop societies which reflect Christian values
 - b. Seeking to overcome sociopolitical inequalities and aiding to liberate oppressed peoples
 - c. Seeking to aid the needs of others through redemptive suffering or personal self-sacrifice
4. Well-being is based upon promoting individual satisfaction and a sense of personal peace.
 - a. Seeking an internal sense of peace through acceptance of God's grace for us
 - b. Seeking to develop one's God given talents (recognizing that we are all created in the image of God)
 - c. Seeking to maximize all individual human potential (as living human life to the fullest is God's intention for all persons).

In analyzing this summary of various themes concerning human well-being in the final two classes of the church study group, we made several observations and decisions about them. One was that while there were many different kinds of suggestions, some even conflictual (such as hedonism as compared to stoic or suffering servant, or communism as compared to Protestant ethic), they were all responding to four basic concerns and value areas. These concerns were:

1. The quality of one's relationship with God and/or the ultimate values in one's life -- This area of concern included following God's commandments, opening oneself up to the power of God's grace, and giving God appropriate worship. It also referred to the creation of ultimate concerns, and being in harmony with those values which give ultimate meaning and purpose to one's life (as in Logotherapy). This value area was labeled the value of spirituality.

2. The consideration of security and survival needs -- This area of concern included biological drives, personal security, self-control of potentially damaging impulses, and being mindful of the long-term effects of decisions upon the security and survival oneself, one's society, and one's world. This value area was labeled the value of security.

3. The promotion of well-being for all people and all of life -- This area of concern included having equal regard and justice for all persons, living a life of mutual respect, cooperation, and love, listening to the wisdom coming from the

many varied voices in the human family, and working for the improvement of all life. This value area was labeled the value of service.

4. The development and enjoyment of one's own life -- This area of concern included seeking personal happiness, seeking and enjoying experiences of pleasure, and maximizing one's own potential. This value area was labeled the value of (personal) satisfaction.

Having developed these four value areas of human well-being out of these common areas of concern, some additional observations and decisions were made about them. One was that these four general concerns are not in direct conflict with each other. There is no intrinsic reason within any of the four concerns that would automatically preclude someone from giving equal attention to any of the other concerns. In the contrary, it made strong sense to us that the four concerns needed to be combined into a balanced approach in order to insure effective long-term human well-being. Such a balanced approach would call for a person or group to give equal attention to each area of concern.

In fact, it can be effectively argued that when particular models of well-being overemphasize one of these four areas of concern to the exclusion of another that an over-all negative result in human well-being will occur. This can be illustrated.

When hedonistic self-pleasure is pursued as one's sole criteria, a selfish, uncaring lifestyle is created. Such a choice can isolate the person, as other people will not chose to

be around them. It is destructive to the well-being of others, as the person takes advantages of or abuses others for their own self gain. It can also become destructive of the long-term health of the person (and sometimes the long-term health of the planet) as s/he pursue here-and-now pleasures without thought to future consequences. However, when the pursuit of one's own self-pleasure is qualified and conditioned by an equal concern for the well-being of others and for the long-term consequences of one's actions, then this responsible pursuit of self-pleasure will have much more positive effects.

Likewise, while caring for the needs of others, even when it might require some self-sacrifice, is seen as a highly noble human attribute; this suffering servant motif, when taken alone, can become a very negative enslaving influence. Therefore, in order to keep the suffering servant perspective from becoming a rationalization for remaining in a victimizing situation, it must be balanced with some equal self-care.

The negative effect of not balancing these four wellness concerns can be seen on a societal level as well. The Protestant ethic has helped to create many beneficial products and has greatly increased the quality of human life over the past three hundred years. However, this emphasis on hard work, production and thrift can become very short-term minded, and has endangered the very survival of our planet (and has abused many individuals and groups of individuals in the process) with over-consumerism, pollution, and nuclear energy. This ethic of production needs to

be balanced with an equal concern for its affect upon other people and the long-term security needs of our world.

A second observation made about these four value areas is that one of their primary functions is to remind us of the various life-contexts in which we exist. Through them we are reminded of the following contexts: that we live in an on-going relationship with a loving creative God; that we live in a physical body and a physical world which have security/survival needs as well as satisfaction needs; that we live together with many other human beings, and our various actions affect each other's lives; and that we live in the context of time, and thus there is not only the present, but a future which our present actions will affect. As we make life decisions, the more we remain aware of these important contexts, the better decisions we will tend to make, and therefore create more wellness for all of our lives. In light of this primary function of these four wellness concerns, I decided to name this model of Christian well-being a model of contextual awareness.

The effect of the above observations was the realization that a healthy understanding of Christian human well-being would need to contain a balanced appreciation for each of the four general wellness concerns that had been identified. In discussing these observations in the last two classes of our church study group, and sharing this beginning model of a balanced approach to Christian well-being, there was a very positive response. The class members liked the concept of

contextual awareness; and the idea of using the four areas of concern to both remind us of the importance of putting time, energy, and value into each of these areas, and to also use them as a form of check and balances in order guard against creating destructive excesses by overly focusing upon any one area.

Over the next year I formalized this model, and began using it in my pastoral counseling ministry. The following year, we reconvened the church study group for two more classes, where I shared the formal model with the full group. This formalized model, which is presented below, is designed according to McCann's middle axiom typology.

A Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being

Underlying Philosophy:

The underlying philosophy of this Christian model of human well-being is that of contextual awareness; which means that as we attempt to bring a sense of wellness to our personal, communal, and global life we are called to be aware of the following four contexts within which we live.

1. An awareness that we the creation of a loving God; and that we are called to be in an on-going relationship with this God.
2. An awareness that we live in a physical world; where security and survival needs are crucial on a personal, communal, and global level, and where current actions will have long-term consequences.
3. An awareness that we live in a continual relationship with all of humanity; where the concerns and experiences of all persons deserve equal regard, and each person deserves equal opportunity.
4. An awareness that God intends for every human being to enjoy a fully developed personal life; where each person develops their own potential, and a personal sense of meaning and internal peace.

Guiding Principles:

Each of these four contextual awarenesses leads to a guiding principle of human well-being. These four guiding principles are to be understood as working together to promote a full sense of wellness. Thus, they are to be used in a complimentary process, which promotes an experience of balance among the values expressed in these principles.

1. The awareness of our relationship with God leads to a valuing of spirituality; which calls for loving God above all else, opening oneself up to the power of God's grace, and giving God appropriate worship.
2. The awareness of our physical world leads to a valuing of security; which calls for caring for personal, communal, and global survival needs, and for considering the potential long-term effects of present actions.
3. The awareness of our common humanity leads to a valuing of service; which calls for giving equal regard to the concerns of all persons, seeking justice on both an individual and a communal level, living a life of love, and working for the improvement of all life.
4. The awareness of our need for self-growth leads to a valuing of personal satisfaction; which calls for enjoying one's own life, developing one's potential, and seeking a sense of personal meaning and peace.

Middle Axioms:

The Contextual Awareness Model attempts to balance the values of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction in maximizing human well-being. The following middle axioms support this process by giving further guidance under each of these values.

The Value of Spirituality

1. The Axiom of Ethical Adaption to Ultimate Reality

Every person ought to form all his/her ideals and choices in relationship to her/his conception of the ultimate reality - the ground of ethical obligation.

2. The Axiom of Ultimate Devotion

Every Christian person ought to love God (our concept of ultimate reality) above all else; and give our God appropriate worship and devotion. While this makes the value of spirituality the dominate value; it does not diminish the other three values (security, service, and

satisfaction). Rather they receive their importance by growing out of this Ultimate Devotion to God, who is the ground of all value.

3. The Axiom of Divine Grace

Every Christian person ought to open themselves up to the power of God's forgiving and energizing grace. This grace does not cancel our human freedom, but empowers us to better use our freedom, and to develop our potential. It insures our ultimate future, and aids us in coping with present realities.

The Value of Security

1. The Axiom of Individual Security

Every person ought to have their basic physical needs (such food, shelter, economic stability, and stable support systems) met; and to develop systems (such as families, jobs, communities, and countries) to help secure the on-going meeting of these needs.

2. The Axiom of Global Security

Every person ought to participate in caring for the survival needs of the human family as a whole, in caring for the on-going ecological health of the planet, and in caring for the other non-human inhabitants with whom we share this world.

3. The Axiom of Future Consequences

Every person ought to consider the potential long-term, future consequences of the alternate choices s/he faces; and choose those alternatives which they perceive as creating long-term results that will promote security, satisfaction, service, and spiritual awareness.

4. The Axiom of Balancing Powers

Every person ought to seek creative, healthful, and secure balances of power between opposing internal impulses, and between competing social pressures.

The Value of Service

1. The Axiom of Equal Regard

Every person ought to assist in the realization of maximum value in other persons, with due respect for their dignity as autonomous centers of value appraisal

and experience, with equal opportunity for all persons, and equal justice under socially approved laws.

2. The Axiom of the Best Possible

Every person ought, on every occasion, to will the best possible values in the total situation; and when possible, based upon all four guiding principles, to act in such a way as to bring the best possible result. At times, this will mean denying self-satisfactions in order to produce a greater benefit overall.

3. The Axiom of Cooperation

Every person ought, when possible, to cooperate with others in the production and enjoyment of shared values.

4. The Axiom of Christian Love

Every Christian person ought to live out an active love for all beings; seeking always to increase their attempts at being kind, forgiving, patient, and giving, and to decrease being jealous, conceited, selfish, or deceitful.

The Value of Satisfaction

1. The Axiom of Self-Realization

Every person ought to seek realization in her/his own experience of the maximum development of his/her own capabilities potentials and enjoyment of life, as long as this development is kept in balance with the values expressed in the other guiding principles.

2. The Axiom of the Ideal of Personhood

Every person ought to judge and guide all of his/her acts by her/his ideal conception of what the whole human being ought to become.

3. The Axiom of Personal Peace

Every person ought to seek those answers and meanings which give her/him an internal sense of peace. Within this model of human well-being, any long-term effective sense of peace will include a balancing of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction.

This Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-being attempts to balance the values of spirituality, security, service, and

satisfaction; and through the middle axioms to give additional explanation to the meaning of each of these values and how they work together. This model, then, is the new theological interpretation of step #4 in which an attempt has been made to create a tradition which is both faithful to the core of the Christian faith, and which also effectively speaks to the human condition of today. It is time now to move to the second practical theological task of step #4, which is take this new interpretation back into the practical situation.

Return to the practical situation. As this hermeneutical process grew out of the activity of pastoral counseling, it is now back to this activity that this Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being is brought in returning to the concrete, practical situation. The original questioning of models of human well-being came out of the realization that in the counseling moment, people were looking for some change which would make their life better. Given this desire, the question was asked concerning the goal, or vision, of human well-being which guided these counseling attempts to make changes in human activity towards this concept of what might be better. The Contextual Awareness Model provided an answer to this question -- an answer which represents my vision of what constitutes a desirable goal for achieving human well-being. This vision, then, is my clearly (and hopefully carefully) defined bias, which will affect and guide my behaviors as a pastoral counselor.

Having completed this formalized Contextual Awareness Model

in 1987, I have used it as a guiding perspective in my pastoral counseling work during these past two years. I have been doing my counseling in Seattle, Washington in a pastoral counseling agency called the Puget Counseling Center. I work in two locations. The one counseling office is in the Center's own building, located in downtown Seattle. The other office is located in the Parish Center of a Roman Catholic parish in the northern suburbs of Seattle.

In June of 1987, after three years of being the Branch Director at the parish setting, I was hired as the Executive Director of the Center, thus increasing my administrative load. As Director, I have split my duties between administration and counseling, doing an average of fifteen hours of counseling a week. This means that over the past two years, while using this Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-being, I have done about 1,500 hours of pastoral counseling. The following comments about my attempts to introduce my new hermeneutic back into the practical situation is based upon these 1,500 counseling hours. These comments will be divided between general benefits, counseling individuals, counseling couples, and counseling families.

1. General Benefits -- There were six general benefits which I experienced in introducing the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-being into my counseling practice. They were:

(a) It provided a clear statement of my motive for doing pastoral counseling. As stated earlier, even though the

counseling process is client-centered, no therapist enters into the relationship as an empty slate. Each and every therapist, religiously or secularly-oriented, has some conscious, or unconscious, vision of healthy well-being that guides their responses and interventions. The goal, then, is for the therapist to be clear about his/her own vision -- and even to declare it in the counseling process -- but to do so as a sharing of one's own personal viewpoint, and not as an established truth. Hopefully, by being able to model clearness in one's own thinking, it will encourage the client to question and explore their own understandings, meanings, and values about life.

Also, there will be those times when a therapist will feel compelled to confront a client with the opinion that what they are presently doing is destructive, and to be able to share their philosophical beliefs about wellness which undergird this evaluation. In fact, some values are so strongly held by the entire community (such as the physical well-being of children) that therapists are required by law to not only confront the client, but also to break confidentiality in order to report the client's behavior (in this case, child abuse) to the governmental authorities. Thus, every therapist has to determine the dividing line between acceptable confrontation or guiding (often called skill-building) and unacceptable proselyting. Having this clear model of human well-being aided me continually in making this type of determination.

(b) Another important way in which the Contextual Awareness

Model functioned as an evaluation of various therapeutic systems and techniques. It is my opinion that one of the most critical dangers in over-relying upon contemporary psychotherapeutic techniques is that one is likely to also assume the underlying cultural biases which permeate many of these processes and techniques. As stated elsewhere, there has tended to be an individualistic and here-and-now pleasuring emphases in the contemporary use of many of secular psychotherapies.

An example of this is how strategic family therapy and ordeal therapy (originated by Jay Haley) are often used. In these therapeutic approaches, specific change-oriented strategies are created to aid the client to achieve the desired behavior change that they want at that given moment. These strategies often do not give much consideration to the effect of their results upon the wider contexts of communal life and long-term consequences.

One pastoral counselor that I knew specialized in "ordeal" therapy, in which he became an expert at aiding his clients in creating ordeals which would more effectively pressure themselves and others to make desired behavior changes. Once he encouraged a parent to dump cold water on her child who was over-sleeping in order to encourage the child to regularly get up on time. It worked, the client got the behavior change that she wanted, but such ordeals do not necessarily build strong relationship ties, or teach the clients effect negotiation skills.

Therapists will often use strategic counseling to develop

therapeutic strategies for aiding a client to leave a marriage that he or she is not presently enjoying. This might bring some additional present happiness; but unless the other human values of spirituality, security, and service are also examined, such strategies may only bring deeper depression and meaningless later in one's life.

Indeed, probably the most common activity in contemporary counseling is where an individual client shares his/her current struggles and issues and pain, and requests help to end that pain. This process can it itself bias the counseling process towards a goal of individual happiness and short-term solutions, and tend to ignore other important long-term, ethical, social justice issues.

Having a fully-developed, balanced vision of human well-being can serve as a clear reference for pastoral counselors in evaluating the underlying ethical, long-term issues in their counseling procedures, and can keep them from becoming too narrowly focused upon individualistic, short-term results. Browning raised this same concern in The Moral Context of Pastoral Care, when he wrote that a primary task for pastoral ministers was to provide a "moral context as a background to his pastoral care and counseling."⁴⁹ I experienced the Contextual Awareness Model as effectively providing this moral background in a way that helped to act as a moral evaluator of any

⁴⁹Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care, 11. Emphasis added.

psychotherapeutic procedure used within the counseling activity.

(c) I had hoped and expected that the Contextual Awareness Model would be helpful as an evaluator of specific psychotherapeutic systems and techniques. However, I had not expected that it would end up being helpful in another area in which it became extremely helpful. This area was in using this model of Christian well-being as a diagnostic tool. For in attempting to better understand the goal of pastoral counseling, I had created, at least for me, a very effective pastoral counseling diagnostic procedure.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the Contextual Awareness Model is its balancing of the four basic human values of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction. Being personally convinced that long-term human well-being is created by balancing these four values, I have found that by analyzing the nature of this balance in the life of my clients, I have been able to develop diagnostic understandings of their discontent. Moreover, I have also found that most clients find these four values understandable and meaningful, and thus, these values work as very efficient diagnostic categories when developing treatment plans with the client.

A common contemporary example of persons suffering from out of balanced values are those clients coming to counseling complaining of what has commonly been called the "yuppie" syndrome. As members of the post-World War II American baby boom, they have had the value of personal satisfaction preached

to them throughout their lives (from indulgent parents, mass media, the market place, and from their peers). The amount of psychological and physical energy that they have put into creating here-and-now satisfactions for themselves has far outweighed any developments upon the other three values. They come to counseling at mid-life, burned-out, in debt, feeling a lack of meaning to their lives, and not all that satisfied. Their typical opening remark is something like "I'm not happy. One should be happy in life. I want to become happy again."

As we have worked with the Contextual Awareness Model, these clients have often found that what they need to work on is not satisfaction (they have been working too hard at that already), but rather to work on balancing their satisfaction efforts with security, service, and spiritual growth. As they begin to achieve more balance among these values, they start to experience more meaning and contentment to their lives. They begin to understand the difference between contentment (a long-term sense of meaning and purpose to one's life) and happiness (a short-term immediate emotion).

(d) Another benefit of the Contextual Awareness Model as a diagnostic tool was that it helped to identify when a person was blocked in a particular value area. It is not that the value area was out of balance as much as it was that some significant event had caused a blockage which either restricted any further development in that area, or caused the person to be unable to value that part of their life any longer.

Typical of this kind of value blockage are number of clients I have seen who are members of ministerial families. As children realize that their ministerial parent has an array of human failings, and as ministerial spouses suffer through a painful divorce, they often become angry at God, and blocked from further developing their own values of spirituality. One of these clients continually uses her counseling session to "debate" God over the way her life has been destroyed in all four value areas.

(e) A fifth general benefit of the Contextual Awareness Model was that in sharing it during the intake session it often enlarged the therapeutic agenda. As the client and I discussed the initial counseling issues that are a part of any intake session, I routinely stated that all therapists have a concept of healthy well-being which guides their therapeutic activity, and that I like to make mine known to my potential clients. I then would briefly share the Contextual Awareness Model. If they had any problem or disagreement with the four value areas, we would discuss them.

The standard result to this process was that the client would first visually relax (as most clients enter a counseling relationship wondering and worrying about the therapist's attitudes and beliefs), and then would speak to these value areas in a way that often enlarged the counseling focus.

An example of this is a couple that entered marriage counseling recently. Their presenting problem was communication

and conflict concerns between the two of them. In responding to the Contextual Awareness Model, the wife stated that "It has been bothering me that we just live for ourselves and for the here-and-now. We are disconnected from the community around us, and we never discuss any spiritual concerns. I would like to see us put more energy into the service and spiritual areas. Maybe that can become a part of the counseling." The husband agreed, and this became a part of the counseling contract.

(f) A final general benefit of the Contextual Awareness Model is that it not only affected my counseling activities, but that it also became very important in guiding my administrative duties. It provided me with a set of guidelines as I attempted to develop and administer organizational procedures and decisions in my role as the director of a pastoral counseling center. Just like individuals, human systems and organizations have issues of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction. I will expand upon this issue in Chapter 5.

As a way of illustrating these general benefits of using the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being in the counseling process, the following comments will summarize and discuss four case studies in which this model was used. Two of the case studies will be individuals, one with a couple, and the fourth with a family.

2. Individual Counseling -- The first specific case study is provided to illustrate using the Contextual Awareness Model with a client who was experiencing both out of balanced values

and blocked values. I will call this client Brenda.

Case Study #1: Brenda

Brenda came to counseling at age 38. Her presenting problem was that her husband was an alcoholic, and it was causing emotional and financial damage. The husband came to the next two sessions of counseling, and clearly declared that he was unwilling to enter an alcoholic treatment program. An earlier professional intervention process had also failed to motivate the husband into a treatment program.

As Brenda faced her husband's unwillingness to change, she decided to begin a divorce process, and asked that the counseling focus be changed to help her and her daughter adjust successfully to life after this marriage. She was especially concerned because this was her second failed marriage, and the seven years between the two marriages had also been very painful years.

Brenda's life story began to unfold in the counseling process, and we began to see a pattern in which she was fluctuating between two out of balanced values, service and satisfaction. It was also apparent that the value of spirituality was involved in the development of her difficulty, and security needs were being almost entirely ignored as she bounced back and forth between attempting to be in service to the needs of others and seeking her own personal satisfaction.

Brenda had grown up in a strict fundamentalist church, which had taught her that people were either "saved" or "sinners." She was also taught that women tended to fall into one of two camps, the "good wife" (patterned after the good wife description in Proverbs, which is basically a suffering servant motif), and the "fallen woman" (who lives by impulse satisfactions). In her first marriage, to one of the young men of this church, she attempted to be the suffering servant, focused entirely upon serving the needs of her husband, her children, and her church. After ten years of putting all her energy into these service area, something "snapped." She could not do it any longer, felt that she was trapped, and wanted to experience some more satisfaction in her own life. She divorced her husband.

Partially because the only options she knew for women were the "good" woman and the "fallen" woman, and partially because she had never been able to enjoy herself, she greeted her new found freedom of singlehood with a complete focus upon experiencing personal pleasure. She partied regularly, drank heavily, was sexually active, and tried to have as much fun as possible. She met a man who partied with her, was tremendously impulsive and fun, but who also lost control of his impulses and beat her when he became overly angry or drunk. It took her several years, and numerous nights in domestic shelters before she was able to get this man out of her life.

Then she met Jim, who became her second husband. He also partied and drank heavily, but was always funny and never violent. Brenda felt safe with him, plus enjoyed his humor and

playfulness. They got married. It was three years into this marriage when she realized that she was back to simply serving the needs of another man, who was doing whatever he wanted; and in his alcoholism was endangering her economic security.

As Brenda and I worked together in the counseling process, we clinically dealt with the alcohol issue by helping her to understand co-dependency issues, and getting her involved in Al-Anon. Along with this, we began to look at the issues of her life from the perspective of the Contextual Awareness Model. Her value of spirituality was blocked as she saw herself as a "fallen woman;" twice divorced, and having shown herself to be unable to fulfill the "good wife" role. She over-emphasized service values in her marriages, to the point of self-abuse and then resentment. In singlehood, she over-emphasized here-and-now physical pleasures, thinking that the missing of these personal satisfactions is what had made her first marriage unhappy. She ignored the value of security almost entirely. Outside of taking care of basic physical needs, she did not put any energy into any long-term personal or communal survival issues.

As Brenda became aware of this see-sawing out of balance pattern to her life, she began to work towards integrating her service and satisfaction values into a more coordinated unit, and making decisions upon their long-term consequences as well as their present enjoyment. Rather than partying and drinking, she took up exercising and hiking as her self-rewarding pleasures. Rather than looking for out-of-control men to attempt rescuing, she began looking for relationships that were mutually respectful, and where there was a mutual taking care of each

other. She focused more on her relationship with her children and their emotional development.

She also spent numerous sessions re-examining her spiritual foundations, especially her learnings about women. As she began to understand the patriarchal bias of her faith upbringing, and to explore more egalitarian models of Christian views of human nature, she found that she could again make spiritual connections with an Ultimate Reality (an Ultimate Reality which gave her more humane options than the good wife and fallen woman female roles). As she began to feel renewed in her faith, she returned to active worship, in a different church, and she began to develop a more positive self-image. She could imagine again that God cared for her, and accepted her for who she was rather than for some role that she was attempting to play. This enabled her to balance her service/satisfaction values even more successfully; for as she felt more worthy of personal growth and satisfaction, her service activities were self-motivated rather than trying to fit into somebody else's mold.

A year-and-a-half after finishing therapy, Brenda returned recently to inform me that she had a new, and better job; she had climbed Mt. Rainier (and proudly displayed her pictures of the event); and was exploring a new relationship which was built upon mutual respect, equal regard -- and no alcohol!

Because pastoral counselors minister to all persons, we sometimes work with clients who have another faith, or more often are living out of a secular orientation. I found that the

Contextual Awareness Model was still effective in these situations. Those clients who have a different or secular faith backgrounds still found that the values of security, service, and satisfaction fit well in connection with their own spiritual dimensions (which in secular-oriented persons are usually described as their ultimate meanings and purposes in life). While the Contextual Awareness Model was developed as a Christian model, the issues of ultimate meanings, security concerns, promoting the well-being of all persons and the world in which we live, and personal satisfaction and growth go beyond Christian contexts. They are universal in their importance in human values. Thus, the Contextual Awareness Model demonstrated itself to be an effective model of human well-being regardless of the faith perspective of the client.

My second case study is of an individual male who lived, and continues to live out of a secular orientation. This presents an example of using the Contextual Awareness Model with a non-Christian client. I will call this client Bill.

Case Study #2: Bill

Bill came to counseling at the age of 25. He was a single male, still living at home. He had recently completed an alcohol treatment program. He called our counseling center, stating that he was in crisis, and so angry that he was afraid that if he could not talk with someone, he would begin to destroy things in his parents home. After an extended telephone conversation, he agreed to an appointment the next day.

Bill was much calmer the next day, and proved to be a very likable, social young man. He began to share his personal story. He was the second and youngest child in a highly successful family. His father was the regional executive for a large world-wide corporation, and his older sister had been always succeeded at everything, and was now a college graduate and holding a prestigious job in another city. The mother ran a small agency.

Bill had been the failure of the family. He had been a very poor student, for which he received a great deal of anger and blame from his father. Many different schools, both public and private, had been tried, with similar failure. Finally, at age 15, Bill dropped out of school and began to seek solace in alcohol and drug use. Three years later, through the on-going care and support of his mother, it was finally learned that Bill was severely dyslexic, and with some special tutoring he had been able to earn his high school diploma. However, his low self-esteem and chemical abuse were by this time well-established patterns. His father attempted to get Bill several entry level jobs, but Bill would always experience some problem or put-down and quit. This would lead to increased anger and frustration from the father, worry and concern from the mother, and confusion and self-hate on the part of Bill.

By age 25, this pattern was well established, highlighted with several Driving While Intoxicated arrests, and alcohol treatment programs. Bill's pain was often projected towards his parents, especially the father, and he had broken household objects in anger on several occasions. Bill had called our center in desperation, as he wanted these problems to stop.

Our initial sessions were spent in building a trust relationship between us, listening to Bill's story, and providing Bill with some strategies for initial anger control (being aware of the energy level in the body, taking walks to cool, calling our 24-hour telephone number if he felt as if he were losing control). These initial sessions took the pressure off of the situation as Bill experienced me as a caring friend.

The parents came to counseling with Bill on two occasions and shared their care and support for Bill. However, they would not enter into a family counseling contract. Bill was interested in continuing individual therapy.

It was at this point that I introduced the Contextual Awareness Model into the therapeutic process. Evaluating Bill's present situation from the four values areas, it was clear that Bill was experiencing difficulties in all four areas.

In spirituality, Bill had no clearly developed sense of meaning or purpose to his life. His one desired meaning -- to be successful for his father -- seemed totally out of reach. There was nothing for him with which to ground his ultimate devotion.

In security, under the axiom of individual security, he was doing nothing to develop this for himself, and continued to need to rely upon his parents in order to provide this for him -- making him feel further like a failure and a second-class person. And under the axiom of future consequences, he rarely looked beyond his immediate impulses, most of which had devastating consequences long-term. To consider the future only produced anxiety and frustration.

In service, he was a caring, giving person; but was so fearful that other people were going to criticize his efforts, he found it difficult to form bonds of relationship and cooperation.

Bill put a great deal of effort into the value of

satisfaction, but unfortunately it was only into here-and-now pleasuring, with little effort going into the axioms of self-realization, the ideal of personhood, and of personal peace.

Thus, Bill was experiencing problems in all four value areas. The model did, however, give us a blueprint to follow as we attempted to bring some more well-being into Bill's life. The core behavioral problem seemed to be that Bill could control his destructive behaviors for awhile, but the lack of any big "success" would soon cause him to feel bored, and like a failure and he would begin drinking again. His drinking never became long bouts, but rather individual episodes followed by depression.

Given this, the core difficulty seemed to be in the value of spirituality, where Bill's only ultimate meaning in life was achieving big success (it was a secularized form of the Protestant ethic combined with the individualistic, capitalistic values of American culture). Until the worshipping of this particular devotion was ended, Bill would most like continue to fall in the other value areas. We began to focus completely upon challenging his "spiritual values" by bringing them out into the open, demonstrating how they had been destructive to his self-image by providing him with only one track by which to succeed or fail, and to develop alternate ultimate meanings.

Through this focused process, Bill finally understood how his worship of capitalistic success had him bound tight in a failure mode, and an alternate meaning was created. That meaning was centered around Bill's "people" skills. While Bill have difficulty with left-brained, logical tasks (the area he worshipped as the only measure of success), he quickly began to develop strong relationship skills. When he let his warm, caring, emotional side be shown he received positive feed-back. He even began to like himself more. He slowly replaced his "male" emphasis upon competition, win/lose, accomplish attitudes with a more "female" emphasis upon relationship and mutual nurturing attitudes. He began to find ultimate meaning in developing community.

With this change in attitude, he became active in AA groups, and in the state association for learning disabilities. Rather than trying to hide and feel shame for his "failures," he turned them into successes, by sharing their realities. He also lowered his accomplishment expectations, and rather than wish for the "big success," he is experiencing many little success at the community college.

With the value of security, he is more focused upon long-term consequences and planning to care for his own security needs (at a modest, and reachable level). With the value of service he is much more connected with other persons, and finding his personal value in these mutual relationships. His own self-realization and satisfaction is growing because it is grounded in a new set of beliefs.

This has had two additional effects. Bill is now getting along with his parents extremely well, and feels their

acceptance. Also, as Bill is able to look beyond his personal pain, he is beginning to explore other areas of spiritual meaning, and the faith dimension of his life is beginning to blossom.

Thus, spirituality, as that value which centers upon what a person feels driven towards is critical in all human life. Being aware to uncover and name that ultimate devotion can often be the crucial moment in the therapeutic intervention -- even when working with secular-oriented persons.

3. Couple/marital therapy -- I found that the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being also fostered more effective communication in interpersonal relationships. In any relationship, an important ingredient is vision congruency. This concept refers to the similarity or dissimilarity of the guiding value systems of two persons, a group of persons, or even a whole organization. Are their visions and perspectives about future directions and goals congruent or not? The theory behind vision congruency is that when high levels of congruency exist in these underlying values, then less conflict will occur. In contrast, when there is little congruency in these values, then more conflict will occur.

The four values of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction, with their fourteen middle axioms, give persons who are attempting to share life together a very detailed structure by which to explore their visions about life. I have found this especially helpful in creating more focused and in-depth communication in couple and marital counseling. Rather than continually rehashing their list of complaints (such as "You work

too many hours, you're never home," or "I can't trust you with money."), couples can use the Contextual Awareness Model to discuss and debate the underlying values beneath their behavior patterns, and hopefully create some more congruent, balanced visions. In this way they are able to create some more well-being and less conflict in both their individual and shared lives. Given the egalitarian, cooperative nature of the Contextual Awareness Model, it has helped to bring more of an equal balance into marital relationship itself. The third case study is an example of this. I will call these clients John and Mary.

Case Study #3: John and Mary

Mary first entered counseling because she was "always unhappy, and didn't know why." She had a "wonderful husband," and a secure home. She was doing what she always wanted to do, which was to stay at home and raise the children (two preschoolers), while her husband worked at his family's business. The problem was her. She was continually getting upset and angry about "little things." She wanted help controlling her emotions, and to be "fixed" so that she could be a better wife and mother.

It was not that John complained about her emotional outbursts. He would quietly listen to her, and then go about fixing the problem. An example of this pattern of behavior was that she often complained that she was so slow and ineffective that she could not take care of the kids and keep the house clean. She would lose her anger and yell at the kids. John, a high energy person, would respond to by telling her to "just calm down," and then proceed to clean the house, do laundry, or whatever task was not completed. This left Mary feeling like she had a "saint" for a husband, and that she was a failure. She came to therapy in order to "calm down" and become a more efficient worker. She would not consider marriage counseling, as she was the problem, not the marriage.

Throughout this initial sharing of her understanding of the problem, I heard her continually discounting herself and her feelings. Rather than to accept her explanation of the problem and develop of a therapeutic process focused upon aiding her in "controlling" her emotions, I shared my perspective of the four value areas of the Contextual Model of Human Well-Being, and wondered what energy had she ever put into her own self-

realization, and instead of trying to suppress her emotions, had she ever attempted to listen to the internal messages behind these emotions. At first Mary resisted this therapeutic response, and continued to label herself and her emotions as bad.

She was willing to discuss her family of origin issues, and so we spent eight sessions gaining a better understanding of Mary's self-image based upon her childhood experiences. She had grown up in an alcoholic, abusive home where she was usually neglected, and when parental attention came her way, it was angry and negative. She attempted to be a "good girl," but no matter how hard she tried, she was continually criticized and declared a failure.

In meeting John, Mary discovered someone who did not criticize her, and who in fact gave her many compliments. He had come from a "happy, successful family," one with whom they were still close. As we explored the self-messages that she had formed as a child, Mary began to see that she had internalized her parents, and was now herself carrying out the pattern of criticizing her efforts as not being good enough.

With this self-realization, Mary was more willing to work at disrupting this self-critical pattern, and look more closely at the underlying concerns behind her emotional experiences. As she did so, she began to realize that she did have some legitimate concerns about her present family life. She began to see she was attempting to put all of her energy into the value of service (being the good girl for everyone else), and the spiritual messages of her traditional Christian upbringing supported this effort. She was allowing John to be in charge of the family's security needs (making her totally dependent upon him), and no one was putting any effort into her personal satisfaction needs. All of the family rules by which she was attempting to live were developed by John. As she began to legitimize her own feelings, she became aware that some of her emotions were coming from the fact that she did not agree with all of these rules. She was attempting to live by someone else's agenda, denying her own perspective in the process.

This self-growth soon began to affect the family situation, which crystallized around a particular incident. Mary had been aware of the fact that the foods desired by John were not a healthy diet, but she prepared whatever he wanted. As she gained more confidence in herself, she began to state her desire for a better diet, and prepare different foods (especially more vegetable dishes). While John stated verbal agreement with this for the children's diets, he would not eat much of the new food himself. When she insisted that he also eat the vegetable dishes, he became angry, yelled at her, and left the house.

Agreeing to my suggestion that they both come in to therapy, we began a four month marriage counseling process. I began this process by sharing the Contextual Awareness Model and encouraged them to discuss the vision and energy that they gave to each of the four value areas. John bonded to the therapy process very quickly, and was not reluctant to do this. He also saw that Mary

was trying to follow his agenda and put all of her energy into the service value. While he liked the control, he was also aware of the pain it was causing their marriage.

Over the four months, Mary and John used the Contextual Awareness Model as a structure for exploring their relationship patterns, to increase their ability to communicate and negotiate decisions and power sharing, and to legitimize one another's feelings. John started to better understand his own individual dynamics, and work on his problem behaviors, especially the need to control. They began to share security concerns, as Mary began to work part-time, which also increased her own self-esteem. They worked at affirming one another's individual value and self-growth. They also started sharing their spiritual beliefs with each other, choosing 1 Corinthians 12 as their model for their family (the body of Christ where each person is of equal value and important, have their own unique talents and areas of activity, and work together in a spirit of joint sharing) rather than Ephesians 5 (the male in loving charge).

In this way, John and Mary worked to form a new, and more egalitarian relationship, using the Contextual Awareness Model as a structure for organizing and guiding their marital relationship. Evaluating their situation from all four value areas, allowed the therapy to open up an unhealthy and unbalanced situation, rather than buying into the presenting problem that Mary was a "sick" woman. Using the Contextual Awareness Model in this way, as an instrument for structuring a marital review, has been very helpful. This is also true in premarital counseling and in family counseling.

4. Family Counseling -- Families exist as a system, and family system theory is based upon the concept that each family member assumes some meaningful role in order to fit within the full systemic unit. A therapist can use the values of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction as identifying characteristics of various roles. As an example, one could argue that in the traditional American family structure, the father

focused most directly upon the value of security in acting out his role, while the traditional mothering role was highly centered upon service and spiritual concerns. Perhaps this helps to explain why many of the children of these traditional American families became satisfaction-oriented. Since the other three value areas were so closely identified with the roles of their parents, personal satisfaction was the only area left with which these children had to concern themselves.

This final case study will enlarge on the above discussion by illustrating the use of the contextual awareness model with a family in high conflict. I will call this family the Jones family.

Case Study #4: The Jones Family

David and Sally Jones came to therapy in the hope to save their marriage, which was in high crisis and severe conflict. They had been married eighteen years, and had a sixteen year-old daughter, Sue, and a thirteen year-old son, Jimmy. They had married right out of high school, and since then had experienced a roller-coaster of highs and lows. Unlike many couples near divorce, there was not a high level of animosity between them. Instead, they continued to have a strong attraction and enjoyment of each other. They described themselves as still in love and good friends. Sally just did not know if she was willing to endure any more of the life traumas that being married to David had brought her and the children. They both described David as an addictive personality. He was a recovered alcoholic, had gone through a bout with marijuana, and had just completed an in-house treatment program for cocaine addiction. It was the treatment center which had referred them to our counseling center, so that the family could receive post-treatment adjustment counseling.

David and Sally's marriage showed the wear and tear of his addictive history. He was a very successful businessman, mostly in various types of sales. They had managed a chain of food stores, he had sold supplies to restaurants and operated a series of video game centers, and presently he was helping her with the merchandise store that she owned. Each of these ventures had ended in financial difficulties, either from the results of his chemical addictions or from his tendency to take financial risks (which were potentially lucrative) which most

often backfired. Thus, their marriage had been a roller coaster ride, some financial and emotional highs, and an equal number of plunges into difficult, stressful failures. Indeed, after the previous business failure, Sally seriously considered divorce. Instead, she was able to get a legal financial separation, and in this way be able to protect herself from any future financial problems on his part.

The latest problems started the prior year. While Sally was turning her merchandise store into a profitable venture, David was supplying restaurants and operating the video game centers. During this time David was regularly on the road, had plenty of money at his disposal, and became involved in cocaine use. He was playing the role of a high roller. Then, home video games became more popular, and David was no longer getting a profitable return on his sizable investments in the game parlors. He had no financial reserves to rely on as fast expansion and cocaine use had evaporated all the surplus from the previously profitable years. The business market failed, and David went bankrupt. David began to work for Sally in her merchandise store, as she felt safe because he was not a part-owner and could not make any of the financial decisions. However, in order to support his on-going cocaine habit, he began to steal from the store. By the time that Sally realized this was happening, he had created a debt for the store in the tens of thousands. She confronted David about this, and he confessed his cocaine habit. This had led to the in-house treatment center, and now to our counseling program.

There was other important aspects to their marital relationship. Five years into their marriage, Sally had severely burned her arms and legs in a backyard accident. She was near death for several weeks, which was followed by a lengthy recovery. David had remained at her side nursing her throughout this ordeal, and she readily gave him credit for bringing her through. This act of love had created a strong bond between them which the many difficult trials had not been able to break. Also, both Sally and David were devoted parents to their two children, and had formed a type of teamwork in which she was the disciplinarian and he was the care-giver. The children, now teen-agers, clearly loved their father. So, despite the betrayal, the unreliability, and the continual crises, Sally was willing to give the marriage one more try. But she wanted the roller coaster cycle broken.

The therapy was structured on an alternating schedule, in which individual sessions with David were alternated with joint counseling with the two of them. Much of the individual time was spent in supporting David in remaining drug-free. The desire to return to cocaine use was strong, and this was aided by the belief that he could handle occasional use. A couple of experiences with cocaine convinced him that occasional use was not possible. With the support of his wife and counseling, he remained off the cocaine, but was tormented by the need for something "exciting." It was here that the use of the contextual

model of human well-being became very useful.

Since the Joneses were not actively religious and lived from a secular orientation, rather than work with them around values of spirituality, I began to encourage David to explore what values gave him meaning and purpose in life. Specifically, I pointed out that even though he had a woman who loved him, children that he cared about, and had shown himself to be smart, creative, and a hard worker - he also clearly had a need for excitement. I was interested in where this need came from, what underlying values were involved, and how this need was related to his addictions. David was very proud of the fact that when he had decided to overcome his alcoholism, he had been able to do so, and had not had any alcohol for over ten years. Similarly, when he stopped marijuana, it was stopped for good. This gave David a sense of having a strong self-control. However, I pointed out that over the long-term he had not overcome his addictive tendencies, he had only switched addictions. With this realization, he was ready to try to understand where this need was coming from, and if it was related to any underlying value of self-meaning or purpose.

We spent a period of counseling time doing a detailed personal history. There were many important factors revealed, but the most important had to do with David's self-identity. I'll summarize the main points here. When David was in high school; he was small, skinny, and shy. No one noticed him, and no one was interested in him. He felt a great deal of loneliness. One week-end, while his parents were gone, he got into his parents alcohol, became drunk, and took off in the family car for a joy ride. He was picked up by the police and spent the night in jail. When he returned to school on Monday, everyone wanted to hear about his experience. Suddenly, he was an interesting person! David quickly learned how to build upon this experience, and developed a "exciting" life of living on the edge - fast driving, drinking, etc. His personality as a fun-loving, daring, go-getter brought him much popularity. It also brought his addictions, risky adventures, and failure.

As David brought these realizations about his self-identity into the joint counseling sessions, he and Sally began to understand more fully the roles that each had been playing. By examining their roles from the contextual awareness model, they began to see that they were each representing half of the significant values of well-being. David was focused upon the values of satisfaction (pleasure and self-promotion), but this was not just for satisfaction alone. His satisfaction values were squarely build upon his life meanings and purposes (spirituality in the Christian model), as these satisfactions were pursued in order to get attention as a fast mover. He was still trying to avoid the pain of his childhood shyness and loneliness, by promoting a self-identity of living on the edge.

In contrast, Sally had spent her life acting out the other two values of security and service. She always prided herself on her stability, her solid grounding, and her caring for other

people. David had been attracted to her stability, and she to his "pizazz." They began to understand that an important part of their attraction for each other was that they were seeking complements to their own over-emphasis. David was looking for a more security-minded person who would take care of him when he fell, and Sally was looking for some more excitement to enhance her stable, but often dull, life. They could also see how each of them had played out these complimentary roles throughout their marriage (with the one exception of when her tragic burning forced them to shift out of their normal roles) - even to the point of their parenting. As the disciplinarian, she was always bringing up the issues of security, and long-term effects of present behavior; while he encouraged the children to seek pleasure and personal happiness.

With this understanding about their roles and the underlying value structure, the Jones were able to break out of their reoccurring patterns. David began to see the costs (a security issue) as well as the benefits of his identity as an excitement-seeker. He began to challenge this identity with a more balanced identity, one which emphasized the value of his families love for him, and the long-term benefits of living with some dull security. As Sally began to share this perspective with him, they were able to develop some vision congruency, rather than representing different value roles.

As Sally and David grew in this new understanding of their lives, an interesting new twist developed. Their daughter, Jill, began to play out the role that David had abandoned. She started to become the pleasure-seeker based upon identity needs. It seemed that she unconsciously knew that the family unit was now secure enough for her to act out some of her own needs in the other value areas. Feeling stupid and unattractive, and wanting to feel desirable; she got into a relationship which included some sexual acting-out and drug use. Family counseling was begun, and Jill was helped through this period of time in her life.

With this family, one can see how various individuals in the system represented one or more of the core value area in the Contextual Awareness Model. By taking these areas on as their central role, this gave them as identity and strategies for responding to life. Because they internally had some awareness that their over-all values were out of balance, they sought mates who would complement their emphasis. Thus, David the pleasure-seeker joined with Sally the provider of security. As long as

they were unaware of the reasons for their various roles, they simply repeated a series of predictable cycles. Only in gaining an understanding of this pattern, and the value-needs upon which the pattern was based, could they begin to create a new, and more productive pattern. Another way of stating this, is that instead of seeking to balance two out-of-balanced persons by relating with each other, their real need was to seek an individual balance of values which they could then share with each other.

These, then, are some observations and case studies which demonstrate the attempt to introduce the new theological interpretation back into the practical situation. This completes the practical theological movement around the modified hermeneutic circle, which started in the pastoral counseling situation and has now returned to it.

Methodological implications. This was the most exciting and rewarding step in the modified hermeneutic circle; the chance to concretely experience the results of the other three steps. Methodologically, this step is the moment for the practical theologian to develop a new theological interpretation and to take this interpretation back into the practical situation. In doing so, the practical theologian moves from doing analysis and investigation to becoming creative. S/he gets to use creative imagination in order to formulate new theological understandings, new practical interventions (in this case, therapeutic interventions), and possibly some new traditions. In this case, the new theological understanding formulated was the Contextual

Awareness Model of Human Well-Being. In introducing this theological model into the pastoral counseling situation, I discovered that it provided numerous benefits which I shared above. These benefits can be summarized into the following three distinct contributions. They are:

1. The Contextual Awareness Model provides some new language for understanding the theological aspects of the counseling situation. As pastoral counseling is focused upon understanding human nature and changing human behavior, this theological statement about a Christian understanding of human well-being, with four value areas and fourteen middle axioms gives the pastoral counselor a theological framework from which to speak about the human situation.

2. The Contextual Awareness Model is a strong diagnostic tool for understanding and guiding the therapeutic process. As seen in the case studies, using a balancing of the four value areas of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction often enlarges, redefines, and redirects the therapeutic process. It also connects the individual, couple or family in therapy with the wider contexts in which they live. As clients interact with the Contextual Awareness Model, they are encouraged to not only work on relieving their present pain, but to look at some of the broader issues that surround and help cause that pain.

3. The Contextual Awareness Model is an effective tool for evaluating other psychotherapeutic systems and strategies. I have found that it is especially effective for guarding against

becoming too individualistic and here-and-now focused in the counseling process, which is an ever-present danger in contemporary therapy.

Two important methodological questions which arise whenever one is using their creative imagination are the traditional questions of faithfulness and effectiveness. In using one's imagination to create a new theological synthesis, one has to ask: "Does the new theological interpretation remain faithful to the core Christian message?" and "Does it communicate effectively within the practical situation to which it is applied?"

It is in formulating new theological understandings that the question of faithfulness is raised. As I attempted to show in the description of step #4, the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-being was developed out of a study of both Christian scripture and theological traditions. The motivating goal of this study was to create a concept of human well-being which was based upon a detail study of Christian principles about human nature and behavior. As seen in the retrieval activity done in step #3, there is not just one Christian theology about human nature, but a number of interpretations and emphasis.

The Contextual Awareness Model is based upon the Christian beliefs which state that all persons are equally created in the *imago dei*, and live in the contexts of being in relationship with a loving God, in equal communion with one's human neighbors, and in a physical world which needs our care and which has long-term consequences. Within these contexts, human beings have the

freedom to make faithful decisions (loving, egalitarian, socially responsible decisions) or sinful decisions (short-term, selfish, oppressive decisions).

These values are, for me, Christian in origin. This does not mean, however, that they are exclusively Christian values. In fact, I find that while the various religions of our world have different cosmological interpretations, they share much common wisdom when it comes to attempting to understand healthy human behavior.

It is in returning to the practical situation that the question of effectiveness is examined -- in this case, the practical situation is contemporary American pastoral counseling. I have shown above how this model had a very positive effect upon my own counseling, as it functioned as an influential context within which clients could examine their own values of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction -- and the balancing of these values.

Another way to methodologically understand this issue of faithfulness and effectiveness is to view it from the perspective of leaping. This is where the practical theologian joyfully explores a theological concern, tests the leeways, and falls; and then leaps again. This Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being is my attempted leap into some new directions, and a new way of understanding the nature of my therapeutic activity. Rather than simply diagnosing a psychological condition, and then applying a recommended therapeutic response, this theological

concept of well-being helps to guide both the diagnostic and the treatment activities.

The concept of falling reminds me that no model is every completed or perfected. Instead, there is always further exploration, discussion, changes -- further leaping -- as pastoral counselors continue to create effective bridges between their faith traditions and their therapeutic activities. Thus, this Contextual Awareness Model becomes part of the on-going traditional process, in which the Church community endlessly leaps and falls as it attempts to create faithful and effective dialogue between its core belief statements and the ever-moving cultures in which we humans live.

The over-all objective of this dissertational study has been to demonstrate the value of practical theology for pastoral counseling. In the specific project reported in this chapter, a particular practical theological method was developed -- the modified hermeneutic circle. This method was then applied to one specific pastoral counseling issue -- the issue of the intrinsic goal to pastoral counseling, out of which was developed the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being. It is hoped that this project has positively demonstrated both actual and potential benefits that the field of practical theology can bring to pastoral counseling. It is time now to turn to Chapter 5 for summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

This dissertational study began with a desire to better understand the uniqueness of pastoral counseling in comparison to the many contemporary secular psychotherapies which have become so dominant in this century of science, psychology, and the explosion of technical knowledge. The question of uniqueness has been especially important in light of the common critique that much of current pastoral counseling had become so identified with and dependent upon these secular psychotherapies, that the practice of pastoral counseling could no longer speak of any distinct contribution. Had most of pastoral counseling lost its theological soul in its rush to be clinically competent? Were statements about creating atmospheres of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation the only theological perspective that shaped pastoral counseling activity? And was this just hanging a theological trapping around what had become a totally secular event?

These questions, then, fueled my interest in making connections between the field of pastoral counseling and the resurging discipline of practical theology. It seemed to be an ideal match, as practical theology takes its theological raw

material from praxis, the reflective study of human activity and behavior. As pastoral counseling is also the study of and response to human activity and behavior, this common starting point promised to provide some new theological tools and insights for exploring the uniqueness of this specialized area of the pastoral care ministry. I believe that this dissertational study demonstrates that the promise has proven to be fruitful.

In analyzing and summarizing the current developments in the field of practical theology, I formulated the modified hermeneutic circle as a methodology that pastoral counselors can use in order to explore the many theological aspects of their work. As a methodological tool, the modified hermeneutic circle can aid the Christian pastoral counselor, as a practical theologian, to examine many different counseling issues in order to determine the theological uniqueness which both comes from and can help to shape one's counseling moments. The modified hermeneutic circle encourages the pastoral counselor to move along a continuous cycle of reflective activity in which one is able to do the following:

1. Break through customary, unexamined ways of viewing familiar activities within one's practical situations; and experience these activities in a fresh, new, and open manner -- as if seeing the activity for the very first time -- and seek underlying questions of value, of existential meaning, and of sociopolitical concern.
2. Use critical suspicion to penetrate these underlying

questions, and develop hypotheses about the underlying nature and motives of these activities.

3. Engage in critical reasoning, revised correlations, and retrieval of traditional wisdoms in order to examine the many theological and historical discussions and answers given to these underlying concerns, and evaluate these discussions from an ethical framework.

4. Develop new theological interpretations and syntheses which attempt to be both faithful to the Christian Tradition, and effective in speaking to the contemporary moment; and take this new interpretation back into the practical situation, which begins the cycle again.

Through this cyclical process, the pastoral counselor is able to create a dialogue between important (and often taken for granted) aspects of pastoral counseling ministry and the varied and rich traditional wisdoms of the faith. In this way, s/he can legitimately claim that his/her pastoral counseling perspective and activity is being uniquely shaped and guided.

By moving through the four steps of the modified hermeneutical circle, I was able to examine one particular aspect of pastoral counseling ministry, which was the underlying goal of the counseling process -- the vision of human well-being. I created a reflective dialogue with historical, biblical, and theological themes of human well-being; and developed a new theological statement of Christian well-being -- the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being.

The Contextual Awareness Model emphasizes remaining aware of our life contexts: being created by a loving God, being part of a physical world with security and survival needs, needing to live in harmony with all of humanity, and along with these other contexts, that God intends for all persons to enjoy a fully developed life. From this awareness, four equal, complimentary values of human well-being are created: spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction. The pastoral counselor and client, by exploring these four value areas together and determining what energy the client is putting into each area, can develop and balance these four values in the client's life, and aid him/her in moving towards human wellness in a uniquely Christian manner.

Positive Contributions of the Modified Hermeneutic Circle
and The Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being

In an attempt to both use and evaluate the modified hermeneutic circle methodology and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being in my pastoral counseling activities, I have shared them with my colleagues at the Puget Counseling Center, other pastoral counselors in the Northwest Region of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, members of my church community at Edmonds United Methodist Church, and with many of my counseling clients. I have also evaluated them in light of the historical and present trends in the field of pastoral counseling as understood in my historical summary of pastoral counseling in Chapter 3. Through these evaluations and feedback, as well as my own experience of working with these practical theological

tools, I have concluded that the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being do provide a positive and significant contribution to the field of pastoral counseling. I attempted to show one of these positive contributions in my case studies and discussion at the end of the last chapter. The Contextual Model of Human Well-Being has functioned not only as a clear statement of my goal of human wellness which guides my counseling efforts; it has also proven itself to be highly effective as a diagnostic tool and as an framework for the counseling process -- both for individuals and for family systems (see pages 202-214).

My evaluations of the past year have convinced me of several other significant contributions which the modified hermeneutical circle and the Contextual Model of Human Well-Being make to the field of pastoral counseling. I will describe seven of these:

1. They fit into the overall flow of pastoral theology in this century. As noted in the historical summary in Chapter 3 (see pages 77-96), Clebsch and Jaekle, in Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, stated that the contemporary period of pastoral care has an emphasis upon educative guidance. Educative guidance focuses upon assisting perplexed persons make confident life and faith choices by drawing out of the individual's own experiences and values the criteria and resources for such decisions. Hollifield, in A History of Pastoral Care in America, argued that while this educative guidance was highly individualistic and client-centered under the self-realization period marked by the

work of Carl Rogers, that this guidance has been more recently understood as occurring within a theology of context. This contextual emphasis can be seen in the work of Don Browning and in the concern among pastoral counselors for developing theological framework for their clinical work. Thus, one could effectively argue that the present movement in pastoral theology is towards aiding people to make confident life and faith choices by drawing out of one's own experiences and values, and evaluating these experiences and values within the wider contexts of one's life and faith.

This, of course, is exactly what the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being attempts to do. It encourages an approach which features educative guidance within a theological context. In doing so, it breaks through the myth of therapeutic objectivity, and brings out into the open the reality that all therapists have an over-riding contextual understanding of healthy human behavior which influences the counseling process. I have found that when a therapist is open about their underlying belief systems about human wellness, that this does not intimidate or invalidate clients. On the contrary, they seem to be very pleased with and respect this type of sharing as they internally know that all therapists have such guiding motifs. When they do not know what these are for the therapist, they tend to fear manipulation more (i.e. wondering what the therapist is trying to do to them). When the therapist shares their own value system in an open, non-judgmental atmosphere, there is more

encouragement for the client to examine their own value systems, and for creative, healing dialogues to take place. This is educative guidance in an over-riding theological context at its best. Thus, these models fit well in the current pastoral theological thrusts.

2. They build upon the work of other pastoral counseling theologians. Also in Chapter 3 (pages 96-109), I examined the work of those recent attempts to describe pastoral counseling in theological terms, such as the work of Albert Outler, Paul Tillich, Seward Hiltner, Don Browning, process theology, and theologies of human liberation. Outler, in Psychotherapy and the Christian Message wrote of a Christian world-view which described human nature as finite and anxious, and where self-realization needed to be balanced with self-denial. Outler believed that this Christian understanding of human nature ought to be part of the counseling process. One can see the foundations of the Contextual Awareness model of Human Well-Being in this work. Tillich laid the groundwork for the critical reflection activity of the modified hermeneutic circle with his emphasis upon the method of correlation with questions arising from the counseling setting and answered by Christian theology (especially on the issue of acceptance). Hiltner was the first pastoral counselor to strongly promote the idea of creating a theological typology (the shepherding motif, with activities of healing, sustaining, and guiding) in order to speak about pastoral care activities from a Christian perspective. Browning has pushed hard for the

awareness that Christian moral thought ought to act as a context for pastoral counseling ministries. Contemporary theologies of the pastoral counseling movement, such as process and liberation theologies, have attempted to explore ways in which their central theological themes can help to shape and guide the counseling process.

In this way, the theological work of these persons and systems have all promoted the idea that there are theological understandings about human life and behavior which can create a beneficial context around the counseling relationship. This work helped to set an accepting stage for my attempts to create contextual correlations between pastoral counseling and practical theology. Most of the above work was done before the current interest in practical theology as a renewed methodological discipline, and therefore, they did not have the benefit of current practical theological insights to aid their work. As Browning complained in 1976, practical theology was the most neglected of the various theological specialties (see page 109). The 1980s has been the decade of practical theology, and its focus upon the methodologies of praxis gives the pastoral theologian new language and new frameworks in which to expand the work of Outler, Tillich, Hiltner, and the other pastoral theologians of the 1950s and 1960s. I understand the theological work of this dissertation being a marriage of the pastoral theological interests of Outler, Tillich, Hiltner, and Browning with the methodologies of contemporary practical theology.

I have attempted to give special attention to the issue of methodology in this disserational study, because I believe that methodologies are superior to systems. If a pastoral theologian develops a particular system (such as the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being) it becomes a helpful, though singular, contribution to the field. However, if one also provides a methodological process (such as the modified hermeneutic circle), then others can use this methodology to create many other systems as well. As noted early in the paper (page 13), a common critique of pastoral theological attempts has been that they have been more focused upon concrete results; and thus have focused upon applied theology, rather than on creating clear theological methods. It is my hope that the modified hermeneutic circle can take some of the current growing edges in practical theology and create a methodological system that can be used continuously by pastoral counselors, as they explore the many underlying theological themes in their ministry.

3. These models fit into the Church's understanding about the traditionary process. Throughout this paper, I have continuously referred to the World Council of Churches' use of Tradition, tradition, and traditions as a way of speaking about the on-going process of creating and recreating new concrete traditions which attempt to be both faithful to the core Tradition of our faith (the Gospel), and effective in communicating its message to the always changing social settings (pages 22-24). The modified hermeneutic circle is a practical theological method for

accomplishing this on-going task of the Christian Church. In experiencing present moments, asking underlying significant questions, being suspicious of meanings and motives, attempting to retrieve traditional wisdom through the revised correlation method, and creating new theological interpretations which one takes back into the practical situation, one is directly involved in the traditionary process of examining present traditions in order to determine how faithful (to the Tradition) and effective (in contemporary communicating) they are, and of creating new traditions which are both more faithful and effective. The Contextual Awareness model is such a new tradition which attempts to effectively communicate the Christian message in the powerful contemporary medium of pastoral counseling.

4. The modified hermeneutic circle has been developed out of the current significant developments in the field of practical theology. As seen in the creation of the modified hermeneutic circle, it is not based just upon the work of one practical theologian, but rather comes out of an exploration of the various themes and controversies in the field of practical theology. I believe that Segundo's hermeneutic circle, which was strongly based upon the activity of suspicion, has been rounded out into a more balanced procedure with the equal focus given to the activity of retrieval. The addition of an ethical review (as suggested by Browning and McCann) and leaping terminology give a further richness and balance to the modified hermeneutic circle.

Even the explorations of current controversies, such as the debate over existential meanings vs. sociopolitical analysis, helped to give more balance to the circle. Even though in this particular use of the circle I was definitely examining material on the existential meaning side of this debate, it could be equally used to explore sociopolitical issues. It is the raw material being examined and the underlying questions being asked that help to determine the existential or sociopolitical focus of any practical theological study -- not the modified hermeneutic circle as a method. Methodologically, it can explore issues in either of these areas.

The modified hermeneutic circle is a rather extensive model, calling for rigorous and continuous practical theological activity in order to complete all four steps. The retrieval activity itself in step #3, could be a life-long pursuit in any subject area. While this may make the model unappealing to many pastoral counselors (I will say more about this under the section on critiques later in this chapter), I believe that anytime it is used in a serious examination of some crucial area of pastoral counseling, it can give the pastoral counselor as practical theologian a rich and full method for effectively exploring important clinical and theological issues.

5. The underlying suspicion which I focused upon in step #2 of the modified hermeneutic circle is currently gaining wider acceptance as the psychotherapeutic community is becoming more interested in understanding underlying ethical/moral values

involved in the human condition. In applying the modified hermeneutic circle to the current practice of pastoral counseling, my suspicion during step #2 leads me to the premise that professional objectivity in counseling is overly emphasized, as all therapists have some underlying belief system about what constitutes healthy well-being, and that this underlying belief system shapes their therapeutic behavior. This premise has continued to gain credibility over the past year or two. In the Winter 1988 edition of the Journal of Pastoral Care, the general theme was ethical and moral issues in pastoral care and counseling. In the editorial of this edition, Orlo Strunk made the following observation:

Nearly four decades ago I registered for my first graduate level course in counseling. The professor -- a Rogerian more Rogerian than Rogers himself -- when he discovered that two of the students in his class were from the school of theology, announced, "I think that it is only fair to tell you that I don't believe priests and ministers are capable of being counselors; they are too stuffed with morals, ethics, and judgements..."

Although billions of gallons of psychotherapeutic waters have passed over the dam and under the bridge since those days, I suspect that it might still be possible to uncover similar naivete in certain pockets of the psychotherapeutic community, perhaps even a few such within the pastoral arts and sciences. But if the professional literature in mainstream counseling and psychotherapy is at all a reflection of the real issues of the times, then it would appear that that early superstition has faded, perhaps even markedly so. What appears now to be the pressing issue is not whether ethics, morals, and values are present in the helping processes but rather how such forces might be best identified and how best to use them creatively in the healing and growth projects.¹

¹Orlo Strunk, Jr., "Ethical/Moral Issues in Pastoral Care and Counseling," Journal of Pastoral Care 42 (Winter 1988): 281.

One of the articles in this same edition was by Don Browning, in which he used the diary notes of a female (secular) therapist to demonstrate the underlying values that were shaping and guiding her therapeutic activities. Through this process, he showed that rather than being simply objective, that the therapist was responding out of an ethical system, in which her beliefs about human well-being were (1) the goodness of human emotions, (2) the centrality of individual personhood, (3) a positive assessment of personal assertiveness, and (4) the need for self-sacrifice in personal growth and development.²

While the emphasis upon therapeutic objectivity continues to be an important clinical concern, there is more of an awareness, even among secular therapists, that value systems are an active part of every counseling process. At the upcoming American Association of Marital and Family Therapy convention in San Francisco, one of the main themes is the building of bridges between family counseling and spiritual values. Thus, the underlying premise about the importance of understanding and acknowledging the therapist's own value systems, which prompted my development of the Contextual Awareness Model, is becoming more widely recognized. Given this contemporary desire to better understand the role that ethical/moral values play in the therapeutic process, the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model can aid the discussions in this area.

²Don S. Browning, "The Pastoral Counselor as Ethicist: What Difference Do We Make," Journal of Pastoral Care 42 (Winter 1988): 283-96.

6. The Contextual Awareness Model provides an effective method for incorporating spiritual values into the counseling process. As a pastoral counselor, one of the unique aspects of my therapy is my openness to and interest in the spiritual dimension of life. Chris Schlaugh, assistant director of the Danielsen Institute at Boston University, has defined pastoral psychotherapy as "a psychotherapeutic activity in which a pastoral psychotherapist observes, understands, and interprets the psychological, religious, and moral dimensions of the ongoing process through psychological, theological, and ethical frames of reference."³ Howard Clinebell has argued that a lack of spiritual and ethical clarity is one of the most significant crises in current western culture, stating that there "is an epidemic of existential emptiness, ethical confusion, spiritual poverty and pathology in our culture which proliferates individual and relational pathology."⁴

I have found that one of the most helpful benefits of the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being is that it provides me with a structure for incorporating this spiritual, religious dimension into the counseling process in a way that is not proselytizing, and encourages the client to examine his/her own spiritual values and to explore how these values are either in balance or out of balance with the other core values of life.

³Chris R. Schlaugh, "Defining Pastoral Psychotherapy II," Journal of Pastoral Care 41 (Dec. 1987): 322.

⁴Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., "Toward Envisioning the Future of Pastoral Counseling and A.A.P.C.," Journal of Pastoral Care 37 (Sept. 1983): 181.

When I describe spirituality (and define it as those values which provide an understanding, meaning, and purpose to life itself) as one of the four value dimensions of human well-being, I have discovered that this often opens up a wealth of material and faith-exploration on the part of clients. This was demonstrated in the clinical case material that I shared in the last chapter. The importance and impact of the spiritual dimension in human lives has been continually demonstrated to me as my clients respond to spiritual concerns with enthusiasm, energy, and deep concern in the counseling process.

An additional example of this is a client who was struggling with attempting to balance his personal desires and impulses with his religious beliefs of serving God. His spiritual values and satisfaction values were viewed as in conflict rather than complementary. He labeled the two parts of himself as the "child of God" and the "child of dust." His initial goal in therapy was to get rid of the impulses of the child of dust, so that he could live completely as the child of God. As he was unable to accomplish this, he saw himself as corrupt and spiritually weak. Neither of the conflicting value areas, spiritual and satisfaction, was getting consistent affirmation, as his internal tug-of-war kept any growth from occurring. By introducing the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being into the counseling process, he began to replace his black vs. white conflictual model, with a more balanced cooperative model in which he was able to begin growing in all four value areas in a

more balanced manner. His spirituality, rather than being a burden and an unreachable goal, began to take on vitality and strength.

7. The Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being has many other life applications in addition to the counseling setting. I have discovered that having a fully developed model of human well-being provides a contextual life strategy which influences every moment of one's living. I indicated this when I mentioned earlier in the paper that I had found this model extremely helpful as I took on the administrative duties at our counseling center during a time of critical transitions. Our director of fourteen years retired suddenly, having decided to return to his home state. The Center was in the middle of its first ever capital fundraising campaign, attempting to raise enough funds in order to purchase a main office building. There were also a variety of sensitive personnel issues to be resolved. I had had some administrative experience earlier in my career, but nothing this extensive.

As I dealt with the various administrative issues, making endless decisions and creating many new policies and procedures, it was extremely helpful to have a clear vision to follow. My vision was simply to take the four values of spirituality (including the meaning and purpose of the counseling center), security (with its emphasis upon long-term consequences), service (balancing the need to make an income with a call to care for people's hurts), and satisfaction (what was the growth desires of

the agency), and with further clarification through their various middle axioms I used these values to develop an agency vision of well-being. The Contextual Awareness Model of Well-Being has truly become a clearly-stated philosophy of life to which I find myself continually referring.

These, then, are some of the significant contributions which I have found that the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being bring to the field of pastoral counseling along with them being helpful as specific therapeutic tools: they also fit into the overall flow of pastoral theology in this century, and build upon the work of other contemporary pastoral theologians; they fit into the church's understanding of the traditional process; they represent the current developments in practical theology; they respond to the current desire to better understand and incorporate ethical and spiritual values into the therapeutic process; and they are enhancing to general life. They are growth-oriented and wholistic in their approach and understand that human beings are complex, multi-dimensional creatures.

Critiques of the Modified Hermeneutic Circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-being

As I used and evaluated the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being, along with the positive feedback summarized above, there were also critiques and stimulating discussion about them. The critiques fell within following six general areas:

1. My treatment of the significant cultural and theological models of human well-being in step #3 created much discussion.

In every evaluation of the project, one of the main focus points of the discussions was on the cultural and theological models of human well-being that I used in step #3. In these discussions, there were two standard types of critique. The first was that a common reaction to the list of models was the response of "What about this other philosopher, or theologian, or system?" Even when it was made clear that I consciously limited the revised correlation activities in this particular project to mainstream Western culture and Christian theology, there have been complaints about important and influential contributors within those two fields that I did not include, such as Jung, Hegel, and process theology.

While these are definitely important theological contributions, I am also aware that in carrying out the retrieval task, one cannot investigate every bit of potentially meaningful material, and must create a cut-off point at some place. In choosing my cultural and theological models of well-being for this initial project, I chose those models which represented major themes which have had an universal influence upon modern Western culture. I made this decision in order to create a workable boundary for this particular project. I did so with the awareness that the main motivation for this project was to demonstrate the use of the modified hermeneutic circle. I also did so knowing that the modified hermeneutic circle is an

on-going, endless method; and that the dialogue created by this project would provide a list of concerns to guide further cycles through the four steps of this method. One of the results of this dissertational study has been the igniting a strong urge to continue this exploration of the history of thought, in order to better understand how various themes have woven their way through human history -- sometimes being in favor, and sometimes being labeled heresies.

The second critique that was given to my treatment of these cultural and theological models is that while I clearly retrieved the essential wisdom about human well-being from each of these models, one of my evaluators expressed the concern that I was not suspicious enough about these models, especially the theological models arising out of traditional Christianity.

My response is that I am very suspicious about how many of these models have been used socially and politically in order to support the status quo and those in power. The main suspicion of the liberation theologians in South America is that the value of Christian suffering has been interpreted and used in a sociopolitical manner in order to maintain the status quo. They are not necessarily in disagreement with the occasional need for righteous suffering (especially if it might bring about beneficial sociopolitical change -- such as the suffering of Nelson Mandela during twenty-seven years of imprisonment). Thus, they are not as suspicious of the underlying value as they are of its contemporary use.

In this same way, I compiled the underlying values of human well-being from a wide variety of models in order to create a full, balanced view of human well-being. In retrieving these underlying wisdoms, I was not endorsing the many ways in which these models have been interpreted into concrete human history, but rather moving beneath some of the suspicious uses of these models to the kernels of insight which could inform and balance our contemporary beliefs about human wellness.

While limited, I do believe that enough varied models were evaluated in this project in order to present a quality presentation of the modified hermeneutic circle. There are clearly other models which might have been added to this initial exploration, and certainly which ought to be added to any further cycles of the modified hermeneutic circle in any additional study of this pastoral counseling issue. Most important here is that in focusing upon classical historical models I clearly did not study enough models that were created by women, and this is the focus of the next critique.

2. Models of human well-being created by women, and the contemporary feminist critique of traditional theological models, did not receive adequate consideration. Modern feminist thought was an important model in this dissertational study, and the analysis by Rosemary Ruether of various types of feminist theology was very helpful in providing a structure for describing the connection between this dissertational study and feminist thought. However, there were three specific critiques from the

feminist perspective: (a) while feminist theology was referred to in general within the Church group project, no individual women were given as the creators of models of human well-being; (b) my agreement with liberal and revisionist feminist thought does not clearly take into account the contemporary emphasis upon radical feminist thought; (c) practical theology as a discipline is currently male-dominated, and is not attracting the participation of contemporary women theologians.

The lack of named women in my cultural and theological models reviewed during the Church study of classical models was a significant failing in my project design. While feminist theology was studied as one of the important models of well-being, it was studied as a movement rather than individual women (such as Hildegard of Bingen, Mary Daly, and Rosemary Ruether) being lifted up as the creators of models. This grouping of women together into a single model rather than allowing their individual voices to be clearly raised created a negative absence which was itself a form of sexism. As a firm proponent of equality of all persons, this was not my intention.

Rather, my intention was to emphasize the issue of equality as a core component to a concept of human well-being. It was for this reason that I used the feminist work of Rosemary Ruether. As my goal was to create a model of human well-being through consensus-building, the more moderate feminist voices of liberal and revisionist feminism fit this goal more than radical feminist perspectives (see pages 183-187). The critique, though, is that

in contemporary theological discourse, radical feminist perspectives stand as a singular force in theological dialogue. It is clear that I needed to more clearly explore and respond to this perspective in my study.

However, I do contend that contemporary radical feminism exists as a critique of current and past patriarchy, and thus is more of a corrective rather than an attempt to create a full model of human well-being. This is not a weakness of the radical feminist perspective, but a clear recognition that all oppressed groups need to move through a radical phase of condemnation and critique before renewed relationship and consensus can be developed (I speak about this need further in my next critique). I did not emphasize this perspective as I was into a more global model-building, for the purpose of better understanding the goals which underlined my own pastoral counseling efforts. My final model, with the balancing of the four values of spirituality, security, service, and satisfaction and with the emphasis upon the equal value of all persons, and the universal right of humans to maximize their own potential, is a very antipatriarchal, egalitarian model.

The third critique from the feminist perspective is that the field of practical theology is presently very male-dominated. I believe that there are two reasons for this. First, women theologians are currently building upon the work of other women and the liberation movement, and their interests are correctly being drawn towards the very exciting work being done in feminist

theological circles. Secondly, because radical feminism is currently putting its energy into the process of critique, its present functions are towards norm-breaking rather than norm-creation. Practical theology on the other hand is focused upon the discovery and creation of guiding norms. In this way, their underlying agendas are presently moving in different directions. This does not mean that they are opposing forces, for eventually, the hermeneutic of suspicion which guides feminist praxis will need the hermeneutics of retrieval, leaping, and creative imagination.

As a final thought in this area, I do not want to give any reader the impression that because I focused upon classical models of human well-being, that I support the patriarchal societies and perspectives out of which many of these models were created. I believe that the underlying core values which were brought out of these models spoke of human wisdom that went beneath and beyond the patriarchal conclusions often drawn from these models. The fact that Freud carried clear sexist perspectives does not mean that all of his work needs to be cast out or criticized as flawed. Instead, one can learn from his explorations into the workings of human unconscious instincts, and interpret these learnings into more non-sexist language. It is my hope that my end product, the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being will be judged from contemporary perspectives and be found to be antipatriarchal and egalitarian in its value formations.

3. The Contextual Awareness Model is based upon the Aristotelian principle of balancing and moderating various values. For some persons, who see a need for occasional intense passions and extremes, this moderation is too limiting of a view of human well-being. There is a strong reliance upon moderation, self-control, and balancing in my Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being. This has been criticized upon several occasions as having an over-reliance upon the thinking and analytical processes of human behavior, and drying up the more spontaneous passions of the human spirit and human feelings. Rather than always remembering the many contexts of one's life, and thinking about the long-term consequences of every action, sometimes beauty, happiness, and the exaltation of the human spirit comes through the unanalytical following of spontaneous emotions.

In response to this critique, I agree that there is truth to this human need for occasional spontaneous, emotional, and unanalyzed passionate living. I understand this to fall within the value of satisfaction, with the encouraging of personal growth through the being in touch with, and giving healthy expression to one's passions and feelings. However, it has been my professional experience as a therapist, and I believe one of the wisdoms of the Christian faith, that this passionate side of human living cannot function as one's on-going guide and principle-setter. Those persons that try this tend to burn out, and to lose sight of the importance of the other values of

service, security, and spirituality. Passion and emotion fit into the totality of one's life, to be experienced and enjoyed, within healthy and constructive boundaries.

Another aspect of this critique has been to argue that some of the world's most admired persons (Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., Susan B. Anthony, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, and even Jesus) have found their well-being, not in balancing personal satisfaction and security with the other values, but in living out the extremes of service and spirituality.

While this is true, it can also be demonstrated that the goal for each of these persons was precisely a balancing of these four values in human living -- for their core motivation had to do with that fact that groups of persons were being denied their chance to develop their values of satisfaction and security. Thus, from a systemic point of view, I believe that one can effectively argue that the over-all goal is to create a balance of these four values for the total system (i.e. the human family and the full creation in which we live). When these values are out-of-balanced in a larger system, then a single individual, or group of individuals (such as Ghandi or Martin Luther King), may choose to live an out-of-balanced life themselves, in an effort to rebalance the larger system. Indeed, the wide admiration that these persons receive is partially because many persons in the wider system recognize their own benefit which has come from the systemic balancing work of these persons. In this way, the model still holds true when

one remembers that it is not just an individualistic model, but a systemic one as well.

4. As a product for the therapeutic process, the Contextual Awareness model is theologically based more upon human freedom of action than upon divine intervention. Another way of saying this, is that I have been often asked, "Where is God in all of this?" In asking this question, the questioner has most often been concerned about the activity of God's divine will on a daily basis interacting with human beings, and what effect this interaction has upon the use of the Contextual Awareness Model of Well-Being.

For me this model is based upon the concept of human free will, for without the freedom of choice, it becomes senseless to speak of determining, promoting, and balancing various values. My understanding of the interplay of God's divine will (or guiding grace) with human freedom has its best written expression in Leslie Weatherhead's The Will of God, and Robert Brizee's Where in the World is God?

Weatherhead attempted to give a more helpful description of the activity of God's will by speaking of three forms of this will. There is God's ultimate will, which is that ultimately the world as a whole will be brought into final salvation. Human beings cannot keep this ultimate will of God from being achieved. God's intentional will is that all human beings will freely choose to so live as to have a satisfying, productive, fully actualized life and to participate in this final salvation.

Human beings, in their freedom of choice, can and constantly do act against this intentional will of God; and bring about sin, pain, oppression, suffering, premature death, and lack of salvation. God is not helpless, though, in responding to human freedom, for God's circumstantial will moves in and through the circumstances that are caused by human freedom, in order to bring about as much movement towards the goals of the ultimate and intentional will as possible.⁵

Robert Brizee, an United Methodist minister and pastoral counselor in Wenatchee, Washington has applied process theological views of God to help describe how God's circumstantial will moves in and through human activities, without destroying or manipulating human freedom. Brizee does this by describing the human decision-making process as the coming together of many voices, as in a council meeting, from which the human will makes the final decision and takes action. The circumstantial will of God is one of these council voices. As Brizee put it:

This council member [God] is unique and speaks as a unique voice in any meeting, for focus is upon what could be rather than what already is. The relationship always offers a lure to go beyond who we have been before. This lure takes into account who one has been and who one is now, but is not limited to that.

God as the Caring Friend is the bringer of these possibilities.⁶

In this way, God lures, supports, and provides possibilities

⁵Leslie D. Weatherhead, The Will of God (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 1-20.

⁶Robert Brizee, Where in the World is God? (Nashville: Upper Room, 1987), 58-9. Emphasis added.

to the human spirit and will; but does not violate our freedom, or manipulate our lives. This concept of human freedom and divine luring and support is a very complimentary process to the Contextual Awareness Model of Human-Well Being. Both are based upon a belief in the freedom of the human will, and both emphasize the importance of a spiritual connection.

I have found the combination of these two perspectives extremely helpful in the counseling process. Many people who come to counseling come with a spiritual crisis. They are confronting failures and sufferings in their lives, and wonder where in the world is God. Is God punishing them through their problem, and if so, why? Or why doesn't God solve their problem for them? Where is this promise to take care of them? God seems to be absent in their lives. They come to counseling angry at God, and feeling confused as to why God is doing this to them. Much of the theology that they hear in their churches supports their confusion. They hear that God blesses the faithful, and when good things happen, people praise the Lord. Many of the people I have sat with in counseling feel much like Job, and they are in a great deal pain.

The understanding of the divine-human interaction as divine luring and human freedom coupled with the Contextual Awareness model allows these persons to overcome this alienation from God. As they review human history with me, they begin to see the great deal of sin, pain, and suffering that has occurred through human freedom. They can begin to see their own sufferings as the

result of choices they freely made at some earlier date, or the result of other persons' choices, or the full movement of human and natural history. They can also begin to see that God is not the angry judge, or the divine punisher (nor is God the great Santa Claus in the sky); but rather God is the Caring Friend who is with them, who suffers and cries with them, and who is gently urging them towards renewed health and restored possibilities. From this perspective, God becomes one of the important inner voices which aids the process of developing, living, and balancing their contextual values -- supporting and encouraging them as they move towards a more wholistic, fruitful experiencing of life. This, then, is my understanding of where God is in the Contextual Awareness Model of Well-Being.

5. My use of the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being is based upon existential concerns, and not sociopolitical issues. In Chapter 2, I summarized the current debate in practical theology about the proper subject of the practical theologian, existential concerns or sociopolitical issues (see pages 53-75). I tried to demonstrate that this does not have to be an either/or argument, but that both are important parts of the practical theological enterprise. From this perspective, as a methodology the modified hermeneutic circle can be used to explore either existential concerns or sociopolitical issues. In this particular study the core issue -- to better understand the concept of human well-being as the goal of individual, marital, and family therapy

for the pastoral counselor -- was more existential than sociopolitical in nature (although I would argue that in balancing out the four value areas of the Contextual Awareness model that one is necessarily confronted with sociopolitical questions).

I also attempted to balance the existential nature of this study in my methodological discussions by referring to possible sociopolitical questions that might be explored by pastoral counselors through using the modified hermeneutic circle. These questions include the sociopolitical implications of the present reality that the majority of counseling clients are female and the majority of pastoral counselors are male, or the American middle-class focus of much pastoral counseling.

Another sociopolitical question that I see as crucial for pastoral counselors is the theological understanding of the marital relationship. There is much biblical and traditional material which supports a patriarchal marital model. Many clients enter counseling with the concept that this is the only proper marital structure, and that it is God-ordained. I would argue that by using the modified hermeneutic model one could create a new and authentic theology of marriage which would be more egalitarian in nature. Indeed, many feminist theologians have been doing this.

I have done this in my own theological development, and encourage my clients who are looking for a biblical basis for their marriage to look at that biblical material in the New

Testament where the writers are speaking about how Christians ought to relate to each other, rather than those reference which speak about husband/wife relationships (as these come out of a clearly patriarchal culture).

Therefore, instead of referring to Ephesians 5 and 6 where wives are told to obey their husbands (in the same way that slaves are also told to obey their masters), I suggest that a more appropriate model is found in 1 Corinthians 12, where Christian relationships are pictured as being similar to the functioning of the various parts of the human body. Like the specific components of the human body, each person within the family body has their unique and equal tasks and talents. The emphasis is upon developing each person's unique abilities and interests so that the family works together in an egalitarian fashion. In this way, each person is uplifted and affirmed as an individual, and at the same time all persons work towards the common good of the family unit. This is an excellent systemic description of the functional family unit, and a helpful and healthful model for today.

Clients have found this shift in biblical images for the family a very liberating one, as has the wider church community when I have presented this concept in sermons or in Adult Education formats. It is obviously an important message that speaks to the concerns of contemporary society. It is also one that I believe is not only effective as a current tradition, but is also faithful to the core Tradition which affirms that all

persons are equally the created children of God. This, then, is one example of how the modified hermeneutic circle can function in exploring sociopolitical questions as well as existential concerns.

5. The final critique of the call for pastoral counselors to become practical theologians and to use the modified hermeneutic circle as a method to explore and guide one's counseling procedures is that to do so is too time-consuming. As seen in the lengthy description of the various practical theological tasks in Chapter 4, the use of the modified hermeneutic circle is a lengthy process, especially in the correlation/retrieval process (which if done properly is a life-long endeavor). The critique that this is a very lengthy procedure is a valid one. For this reason, many pastoral counselors will not invest the time and energy to become skilled practical theologians. In my suggestion that the field of pastoral counseling ought to bond closely with and make use of the rich resources of contemporary practical theology, I am aware that this will not happen on wide-spread, individual basis. Rather, it is my hope that this dissertational study will play some part in bringing these two fields closer together, starting at the seminary level. If pastoral counselors as practical theologians can be encouraged at this level, then the results of the work that they do in bridging these two fields can be shared with pastoral counselors in general.

Let me illustrate this with the two models that I have

created in this practical theological study, the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being. I see the modified hermeneutic circle as a practical theological method being of primary interest to those persons who function both as pastoral counselors and practical theologians, most likely at the seminary level. I see the Contextual Awareness model as a practical theological result as having a wider application, as all pastoral counselors functioning in the clinical setting could interact and explore this model as a way of more fully unpacking their own functioning belief systems about human well-being.

These critiques and discussions concerning the modified hermeneutic circle and the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being have helped to further clarify and explain my own understandings about the use of these practical theological instruments. I have appreciated the interest and enthusiasm which my many colleagues have brought to these discussions, and I am more convinced than ever that the field of practical theology has much to offer the discipline of pastoral counseling. I began with that conviction at the start of this dissertational study, and I will end with it in my concluding remarks.

Concluding Remarks

This has been a very rewarding experience for me. When I took a seminar in practical theology in 1982, I became excited about the quality of resources that it seemed to offer the field of pastoral counseling. As both fields are based in the praxis

of human experience, it seemed to be a natural place for pastoral counselors to turn in order to better understand the theological foundations and uniqueness of their therapeutic ministries. In light of the numerous critiques that contemporary pastoral counseling was losing its soul to the secular psychotherapeutic community, such a bonding between pastoral counseling and practical theology seemed not only a natural relationship, but a critically needed one as well.

My excitement about the potential of such a bonding of these two fields has only grown as I have worked on this dissertational study, and have applied its results to my own counseling process. In Chapter 3, I made the observation that the field of practical theology has at least three main contributions to make to the field of pastoral counseling. They are (1) that practical theology is a theology of context, and can provide specific resources to aid the current interest in relating pastoral care and counseling to their broader theological contexts; (2) that practical theology has an unique ability to guide and balance the complex dialogue between historical theological resources and the insights of contemporary psychotherapies; and (3) that practical theology moves beyond normative theological formulations and one scheme theologies, to provide pastoral counselors with a multi-level methodology for correlating pastoral counseling activities and theological interpretations. In the development of the modified hermeneutic circle, applying it to one pastoral counseling issue, and developing a new theological interpretation

In the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being, I believe that I have adequately demonstrated that these observations have proven to be correct.

As I noted above, it is my suggestion that there be a two level relationship between pastoral counseling and practical theology. On the one, more intense level, pastoral counselors as practical theologians can use the rich methodological insights of practical theology (such as the modified hermeneutic circle) to study particular pastoral counseling issues in depth and develop faithful and effective theological traditions and formulations (such as the Contextual Awareness Model of Human Well-Being). On the second, less intense but more general level, pastoral counselors as clinicians can begin to make use of these new formulations in order to enrich the theological quality and pastoral uniqueness of their therapeutic activity.

Through this two level relationship the human cycle of activity, praxis, development, and new activity can continually be acted out in a way that the traditionary process of the Christian community can constantly renew the message of the endless Tradition into the contemporary moment of pastoral counseling. Such a on-going marriage between these two fields of ministry represents practical theology and pastoral counseling at their best.

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